

LIVERPOOL 1980



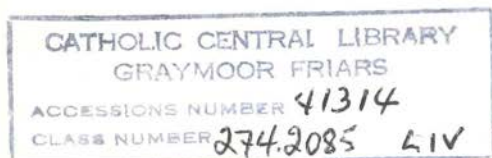
**Official Report
of the National Pastoral Congress**

LIVERPOOL 1980

OFFICIAL REPORT
OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL CONGRESS



St Paul Publications



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FOREWORD

The publication of this official report of the National Pastoral Congress brings to a fitting conclusion a stage in the task which the Catholic Church in England and Wales has set itself. We are attempting consciously and purposefully to apply to our life and work as the People of God the teachings and the consequences of the Second Vatican Council. By means of the Congress, we have been taking our bearings as we paused on our journey. I believe we have seen more clearly the route we must follow on the next stage of our pilgrimage. The official documents of the National Pastoral Congress are here published in full for the first time and in a single volume. This report will remind delegates of what was undoubtedly a significant experience. It will help lay people, religious and parish clergy to understand in greater depth the demands to be made on themselves and the whole Catholic community if we are to be faithful to the commitment of our baptism and confirmation.

For the Congress must now become a shared experience of the People of God in England and Wales. Over 2000 delegates represented their fellow Catholics at Liverpool. What we achieved together then must be carried back to the homes, parishes and deaneries of each diocese. There can be no rigid guidelines to be followed in every circumstance. Faced with the particular set of circumstances which make up our own situation, we must learn prayerfully and courageously to bring with us 'wherever we are and whatever we do, the saving power of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life'. The Congress reports set out the hopes, anxieties and ideals of the People of God. *The Easter People* set up the necessary signposts to ensure that we are travelling forward together as a Pilgrim Church and that we do not lose touch with each other or mistake our destination. What is needed is an act of faith and vision on the part of our whole community. We need too an outpouring of energy to keep us on the march despite obstacles and dangers. *The Easter People* is of great importance for the Church in England and Wales. It is not, however, the last word on our pastoral and spiritual renewal; it will need attentive reading, careful reflection and then vigorous action. One day it will be superseded by new guidelines and further signposts. Until then it is an indispensable guide on our pilgrimage.

At the head of this official report, I wish to place on record the gratitude of the Catholic community in England and Wales to those countless people who prepared for the Congress, who supported it by prayers, sacrifice, generosity, and much labour. We owe thanks to the national committee and to the untiring zeal of its chairman, Archbishop Worlock. We are deeply indebted also to Fr Tom Shepherd, to his assistant, Fr Erskine, and to the devoted staff at the Congress office. The Catholic community of Liverpool, through its permanent organisations and the many individuals and families who so generously undertook great responsibilities before and during the Congress, has left an indelible impression on us who benefitted from its welcome and its work.

Cardinal Basil Hume
Archbishop of Westminster

INTRODUCTION

When I was first asked by the Bishops' Conference to 'set up a Pastoral Congress in Liverpool' to deal with the mission and spirituality of our Church in England and Wales, I knew at once that it could only succeed with God's blessing and with the effective and enthusiastic help of collaborators prepared to share our vision of where Christ's way might lie for us. In both aspects we have been greatly blessed.

In the initially impersonal account given in these papers, the ever-present guidance of the Holy Spirit is self-evident. But behind each paragraph lie the efforts of devoted members of the Church who never failed to face up to each new challenge. We were treading new ground and — in one sense mercifully — we could not always foresee all that would be asked of us. In the whole long process we shed no one, and we grew together in a joyful and supportive relationship which was and still is of Christ.

To all who worked in this way, nationally and in the dioceses, I wish publicly to give my thanks. My personal gratitude must go to the two bishops appointed to help me — Bishop Konstant and Bishop McCartie — and to the members of our National Committee, who were able to achieve so much through the inspiration and co-ordinating work of Fr Tom Shepherd.

When the Congress in Liverpool was itself over, there remained many tasks to be completed. The preparation of this record, with all the important reports to be drawn together in usable form, has inevitably taken time, and could not be completed until the Bishops' Message, *The Easter People*, had been published. Its compilation was entrusted to two members of the Committee who have, amidst so many other duties, laboured on: Mgr George Leonard (of Archbishop's House, Westminster) and Miss Patricia Jones (of the Liverpool Youth Service). So my final and heartfelt thanks is to them.

Cardinal Hume has said that when Pope John Paul II visits our Church in England and Wales in 1982, we must be ready to report on what has been done in the dioceses and organisations to help on our becoming the

Easter People. May this book, which is not just a commemoration volume, help on the work. The Committee and organisation, which I had the privilege to lead, would ask no more. We make our own the final words of the Congress Declaration: 'Now we offer all our work and endeavours to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. With Mary's prayers let us, as God's people on pilgrimage, go in peace to love and serve the Lord'.

Derek Worlock

Archbishop of Liverpool

(Chairman, National Pastoral Congress Committee)

I

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

The National Pastoral Congress is rooted in the post-conciliar experience of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. While its immediate preparation lasted just over two years, the project itself has been evolving for almost a decade. Throughout the first half of the 1970s a small official working party, composed of bishops, diocesan priests, religious and laity, considered in depth the pastoral situation in England and Wales. The working party sponsored jointly by the Bishops' Conference and the National Conference of Priests, produced two documents, an interim report called *Church 2000* and a final report entitled *A Time for Building*. The latter document put forward the proposal that a national conference be convened to consider pastoral priorities and to determine the broad outlines of a national pastoral strategy. This proposal was strongly supported by the 1977 meeting of the National Conference of Priests and an outline of what might be the shape of such a conference was prepared by Mgr Joseph Buckley, a member of its standing committee.

In April 1978 the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales made a feasibility study of such a congress, and came to the conclusion that the time had indeed come to assess the various efforts made nationally to implement the call of the Second Vatican Council for renewal and to try to achieve some general pastoral strategy for the future. The bishops were anxious that this assessment and planning should be pastoral rather than structural and that the coming together of delegates should concern itself with spiritual renewal as well as with ways of carrying out the Christian mission in present circumstances. There must be adequate preparation involving as many people as possible in their dioceses and parishes. It was to be designed in such a way that there would be reasonable hope for effective follow-up in the dioceses. Those taking part would have to be as representative as possible. And the gathering of all representatives was to be strictly consultative in character, leading to no permanent consultative structure.

The organisation of this National Pastoral Congress was entrusted to the Most Rev. Derek Worlock, Archbishop of Liverpool, who was to be assisted by the Right Rev. David Konstant, area bishop of Central London, and the Right Rev. Leo McCartie, auxiliary bishop in Birmingham. The bishops agreed that the Congress should take place in Liverpool two years later and that in the meantime the dioceses of England and Wales should be involved in a widespread catechesis. Later they identified the theme of the Congress as 'Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life' and announced the calling of the Congress in the following terms:

'Over the past decade, since the end of the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church in its homes, parishes and dioceses has been slowly discovering the fruits of the Council. This has been a process both exciting and unnerving: exciting because of the new visions unveiled; unnerving because of the unfamiliarity of the ways.

On every journey there were to be opportunities to check the way and to take stock, so as to walk more certainly in the future. There have also been several consultation-documents bringing responses calling for careful consideration. With all this in view a National Pastoral Congress will be held in 1980, taking as its theme: "Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life".

In the eighteen months preceding the Congress every diocese in England and Wales will make its own preparation, so that at the Congress itself a substantial representation of the Church, prepared in mind and spirit, will be able to reflect together on the developing life and mission of the Church. In this way, the Catholic Church in England and Wales may be encouraged to go forward renewed in faith and hope and love' (June 1978).

Representation

From the beginning it was recognised that to be authentic representation must be drawn from all parts of England and Wales, and be sufficiently numerous that the local voice could be heard, and that the message and spirit of the Congress could be taken back to each locality after the gathering in Liverpool had been completed. On any Sunday, 1,750,000 Catholics (out of an estimated four million baptised Catholics) attend Mass. Allowing for old age, sickness and other compelling circumstances, the numbers regularly at Mass are about 50% of those baptised, including the lapsed. It was therefore agreed that each diocese should send one delegate for each 1000 of its Mass attendance on any one Sunday. In addition, each Catholic national organisation would have one delegate, and there would be representation from the Catholics in HM Forces, the universities and seminaries, the religious orders, the commissions, the Prison Service,

ethnic groups (e.g., the Polish community had 30 delegates) and a limited number of Catholics chosen because of their expertise, but whose national secular duties would normally exclude them from being chosen as members of diocesan delegations. There were 36 ecumenical observers from the British Council of Churches and the Liverpool area, as well as episcopal observers from the Bishops' Conferences of Scotland and Ireland and four observers from the Holy See. The total number attending the Congress was 2115, of whom 310 were under 25 years of age and about 100 still in their teens. There were 42 bishops, 255 clergy (including 7 permanent deacons) and 150 religious men and women.

Dioceses vary from the rural to the densely populated industrial areas. Each diocese was therefore left to establish the best method of choosing representation in the light of its own situation. Generally speaking, though, representatives were elected from deaneries or groups of parishes. The Committee insisted that there should be a preponderance of lay delegates and an adequate representation of young adults. A wide spectrum of background and experience emerged: the delegations were almost equally divided between men and women.

Method

The National Committee was charged with the responsibility of planning the preparation work for the Congress. The basic plan was to assist each diocese and organisation to assess its character and work, to determine its priorities and to prepare for the gathering in Liverpool. It was agreed not to determine the agenda of the Congress until reports had been received from the dioceses indicating their priorities, initiatives and major concerns. In all, eight Congress discussion papers were published and circulated widely in parishes and deaneries throughout England and Wales. The first three papers were drawn up on the initiative of the Committee to launch the nationwide involvement in Congress preparation. It was always intended, however, that the topics for discussion preparatory to the Congress should arise from concerns felt in the Church at large. To find these, a list of 'priorities' was widely issued in January 1979. People were asked to indicate the six topics they considered of major importance. The poll results were as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Unity with other Christians | 67% |
| 2. The particular needs and problems of young people | 66% |
| 3. Education in all forms and for every age group | 60% |
| 4. Third World: justice and peace; world hunger; overseas aid; apartheid | 58% |

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 5. War, peace and violence; arms trade; human rights | 56% |
| 6. Ministry: vocations; deacons and other ministries | 54% |
| 7. How to spread the Christian Gospel more effectively | 51% |
| 8. More responsible involvement of lay Catholics in the life of the Church | 49% |
| 9. Present day value of our local organisation in the life of the Church | 36% |
| *10. Racial discrimination; immigration; multi-cultural society | 34% |
| 11. Town and country living; decay of the inner city, etc. | 27% |
| 12. Use of natural resources; nuclear energy; pollution; profit | 21% |
| 13. Role of women in the Church and in the world | 20% |

* The returns indicated that wherever there was a large coloured population this concern received priority.

20,000 replies were received by the agreed closing date. Later, the results of three individual dioceses and of personal replies brought the total to 45,000. It was found that a number of replies represented the views of whole parishes and the estimate is that the responses represented the views of over 100,000 people. It was as a result of these answers that the remaining five discussion papers were planned.

The full list of Congress discussion papers is:

1. Marriage and the Family; 2. The World of Work; 3. Growing in Faith; 4. You and the Church; 5. A Question of Justice; 6. Young People in the Church; 7. Unity Among Christians; 8. Catholic Education: A Partnership. From the beginning it was emphasised that these were preliminary discussion papers and were not the Congress agenda. Their aim was to stimulate discussion. They adopted no stance. They were rooted in local and real experience. The agenda for the Congress was drawn up from the major topics which emerged from the reports of dioceses and organisations.

It must also be remembered that the Congress Committee made it clear from the start that spirituality, prayer and renewal were not to be treated separately. They were part of every topic and the subject of a programme of renewal which ran concurrently with the discussions at local level.

Great care was taken over the spiritual preparation for the Congress. All religious houses of contemplative priests and nuns were asked to

make this a special part of their daily intercession. Similarly, the Charismatic Renewal undertook to pray for the Congress in prayer groups and on renewal days and at conferences. There were special publications of prayers and assembly-services for use in schools and churches. A Congress prayer was written and widely distributed and used. A Congress Mass and hymn were commissioned, composed and sung in all churches of both countries. Books of para-liturgical services and prayer-leaflets for family use were published. The archbishops and bishops of England and Wales issued a joint Pastoral Letter calling on priests and people to make special spiritual preparation for the Congress during the four weeks between the lighting of the Paschal Candle on Holy Saturday night until the lighting of the Congress Candle on May 2 during the opening service for reconciliation, held simultaneously with identical services in churches nationwide.

The eight discussion papers were circulated in tens of thousands throughout the parishes of England and Wales. It is impossible to say how many individuals and organisations took part in these discussions over a period of sixteen months but over 70% of the parishes sent written reports to the diocesan co-ordinators. Similarly, response was made by national bodies to the Congress office in Liverpool. These replies, together with the more detailed reports prepared by each diocese (some of them several hundred pages in length), enabled the Congress Committee to submit a detailed agenda to the Bishops' Conference in November 1979. This agenda was published in December 1979, and the views contained in the reports received were summarised in the form of a tabloid newspaper called *Congress Contact* which was sent to each individual delegate. From January 1980 the diocesan delegates met regularly with their bishops to study their own diocesan reports and the summarised views of other dioceses. Delegates were assigned to a particular subject which they were studying and about which they sought the views of those they represented. Similar briefing gatherings were arranged for commission members and representatives of lay organisations. Generally speaking, the preparation for the Congress was a catechetical opportunity without parallel and an unprecedented method of widespread apostolic formation.

Organisation

The bishops decided that the organisation of the Congress should, from the start, be centred on Liverpool and an office be established there. They appointed as General Secretary the Rev. Thomas Shepherd, a priest of the diocese of Menevia in Wales, and later, to assist him, a Montfort Father, the Rev. Samuel Erskine, SMM. A Congress Committee was set up at once and charged with the overall preparation of the Congress. Members of the Committee were drawn carefully from each region of the two countries, from every age group and a variety of backgrounds. Although

all were active in the life of the Church, they were not chosen to represent organisations, commissions, religious orders or agencies. There were five women and seven men.

Diocesan co-ordinators were appointed by local bishops and were key figures in the preparation for the Congress and for its implementation. They were made responsible for the distribution of Congress literature and the setting up of the organisation which was to inform and involve all areas of Church life in their diocese. Usually they worked with a small executive group or committee. They received the reports from parishes and organisations within the diocese. From these reports they each drew up a diocesan report by November 1979 which formed the basis for the eventual agenda of the Congress. They were also responsible for ensuring that representatives were selected at local level. They were charged with organising a diocesan mini-Congress early in 1980 to consider the findings of discussion groups in their area and the action to be taken on them in the diocese. Through their efforts, most diocesan representatives came to the Congress not only fully briefed on their particular subject, but fired with a sense of being truly representative of their local community and aware of their spiritual responsibility.

Deanery 'link-men' were important in the chain. Each deanery consists normally of nine or ten parishes. Usually one priest in each deanery, acting in close collaboration with the diocesan co-ordinator, was responsible for the promotion of the Congress in his deanery. It was an attempt to develop the deanery as a pastoral unit and a possible way of stimulating local interest even if individual clergy were not on occasions co-operative. Deanery committees were also established. In most cases each parish elected and sent two representatives to a meeting of the deanery. They were to share the experience gained through parish consultation. Closer co-operation and co-ordinated action between the parishes of the deanery were thus ensured. From those present at the deanery meeting the representatives to the Congress were elected. The deanery was also asked to compile a digest of parish reports for the diocesan co-ordinator.

Diocesan pastoral councils increased significantly in number once the full import of preparations for the Congress was grasped. They provided the necessary structure for assessing the reports from the parishes and organisations and for deciding the action to be taken.

Parish discussion groups proved indispensable in enabling Catholics to take an active part in preparing for the Congress. Some clergy found great spiritual and practical value in commencing and sustaining small groups through House Masses. The 'see, judge and act' method — used in the preparatory Congress discussion literature — ensured that parishes considered their own priorities, decided in the light of faith what needed to be done, and then took the appropriate action.

The Agenda

The themes for discussion at the National Pastoral Congress were derived from the requests contained in the diocesan reports. The linking theme throughout had been 'Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life'. Within each part of the agenda, delegates were encouraged 'to find out how Jesus Christ speaks to us, and how as a result we, both as individuals and as the Church, should live and pursue our mission to the world in which we live and to which we are sent'. That was, as it were, the 'grid' against which each subject on the agenda was to be examined. Thus the spirituality of the Church was to be integrated into each aspect of its mission, rather than be seen as a separate subject. Similarly the ecumenical aspect of each subject was to be kept in mind rather than be treated as a separate theme. For this reason, the ecumenical observers were assigned to each group amongst the delegates.

The seven major themes for the agenda were:

- The People of God — Co-responsibility and Relationships
- The People of God — Ministry, Vocation, Apostolate
- Family and Society
- Evangelisation
- Christian Education and Formation
- Christian Witness
- Justice

Each theme was discussed in a separate sector of the Congress and in each sector there were approximately 300 delegates. But each item was itself divided into four or five topics or aspects: so for each topic group there were approximately 60 delegates. These 60 delegates were themselves to be divided into discussion groups of 12-15 delegates for preliminary work on each topic. The headings of the full agenda, with the topic titles, were as follows:

THEME A: PEOPLE OF GOD (i) *Co-responsibility and Relationships*

TOPICS

- ★ The Worshipping Community
- ★ The local Church: diocese, deanery, parish, basic communities, prayer groups
- ★ Co-responsibility and Consultation
- ★ Promotion of Christian Unity
- ★ Christian Stewardship and Church Finances

THEME B: PEOPLE OF GOD (ii) *Ministry, Vocation, Apostolate*

TOPICS

- ★ The Ordained Ministries: episcopate, priesthood, diaconate
- ★ The Community and Other Ministries
- ★ The Religious Life
- ★ The Apostolate of the Laity
- ★ The Role of Women

THEME C: FAMILY AND SOCIETY

TOPICS

- ★ Christian Marriage and the Family
- ★ Single People
- ★ Old People
- ★ Young People
- ★ Special Groups: disabled, immigrants, seafarers, non-Christians

THEME D: EVANGELISATION

TOPICS

- ★ At Home: the work of conversion
- ★ Missionary Activity Overseas
- ★ Funding and Sharing in Mission
- ★ World Development

THEME E: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION

TOPICS

- ★ Parish Catechesis
- ★ Schools (including school liturgy)
- ★ Tertiary Education and Academic Life
- ★ Adult Education and Sacramental Living

THEME F: CHRISTIAN WITNESS

TOPICS

- ★ World of Work
- ★ Urban and Rural Life
- ★ Public and Civic Life
- ★ Communications

THEME G: JUSTICE

TOPICS

- ★ Human Rights
- ★ Racial Justice
- ★ International Peace (including disarmament)
- ★ Prisoners

How the Congress worked

For each sector and its major theme a sector president was carefully chosen by the Congress Committee. Two committee members were assigned to each president and they together developed the final shape of the agenda for their sector and, after securing the approval of the committee chairman, they also chose the people to lead each topic group. The seven sector presidents comprised one religious and one diocesan priest, one religious woman, two laymen and two laywomen.

The work of the sectors took place in three different stages. The first two stages consisted of discussion of the topics by groups of about 60 delegates working on each topic. In the first stage, small discussion groups of about a dozen reflected on specific aspects of each topic. In the second stage the small groups came together as a topic group and formulated common ideas on their particular area of concern. The third and final stage consisted of all the topic groups meeting together for the sector conference at which the different topic groups each submitted reports which were discussed by all the delegates who were working on the same sector theme.

In effect, this meant that seven related conferences worked in parallel for three days, to come together only on the fourth day for the plenary session in the Philharmonic Hall during which the presidents read to

the whole assembly the seven sector reports which, although attracting frequent and enthusiastic applause, were not voted on as such by the Congress. They were later carried up to the altar at the closing Mass and presented by the presidents at the Offertory. The sole document that can be claimed as a full Congress statement was the Declaration read to the plenary assembly by Cardinal Hume and carried by acclamation.

There was obviously a risk of fragmentation in following such a scheme of work. To secure adequate consultation and collaboration, members of the Congress committee were housed at Christ College in Liverpool so that they saw each other before and after daily sessions; the sector presidents met each evening before and during the daily press conference; the delegates were themselves kept in touch with the overall progress of the Congress and with each day's events by the daily publication of *Congress Contact*, a tabloid newspaper which carried official reports on the previous day's meetings. Two editions of the paper were printed before the Congress and carried in popular form the preliminary diocesan reports on the seven agenda themes and subsequently a more detailed treatment of those themes drawn up under the supervision of the sector presidents. The daily edition was under the general editorship of the editor of the Liverpool diocesan newspaper, the *Catholic Pictorial*. He led a team from Catholic Information Services and from the Congress's information officers who were largely recruited from the dioceses.

The Congress timetable

The Congress opened on the evening of Friday May 2. The weekend had been carefully chosen to include the public holiday which occurred on Monday May 5; this extended the Congress and meant that lay delegates had to take only one day off work at the beginning and the end of the Congress.

The arrival and settling in of the 2000 delegates was a model of precision-planning. While some came by private transport, most delegates came in diocesan groups by coach or train. They were met at a motorway service station or at the railway station, swiftly regrouped into sectors and then moved by road to the sector centres. At the seven schools set aside for these groups, the delegates were registered, allocated to their host families, given final documentation and were taken by volunteer drivers in cars to their accommodation for the weekend. Within a few hours of arrival in Liverpool they were ready to return to the centre of the city for their first communal experience of the Congress.

Public worship and a pervading atmosphere of prayer were major influences throughout the weekend. The Congress opened with a solemn service

of reconciliation in the Metropolitan Cathedral and ended with a heartfelt and magnificent Mass of Thanksgiving. The Congress candle was kept alight throughout, both in the Cathedral and sector centres. The bishops asked parishes throughout England and Wales to identify with what was happening in Liverpool by holding their own services of reconciliation on May 2, by keeping alight their own Congress candles and by praying constantly for God's blessing on the Congress. In each sector centre the main assembly area was also the setting on Saturday and Monday for a Mass which drew those particular delegates together and distilled into prayer and worship what they were debating in their groups. Whenever they came together as a sector they gathered round their altar and had before their eyes the open bible, the Congress candle and the tapestry behind the altar representing Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. In this way, it is true to describe the Congress as being threaded through by prayer and worship. Delegates seemed conscious of being part of the local communities which they represented and whose prayers and concern were supporting and encouraging them. The two messages from Pope John Paul II, one at the service of reconciliation and the other at the first sector meetings, were an effective reminder of the universal dimension of the Church and of the Catholic faith to which the Congress pledged unwavering commitment.

The first full day of the Congress, Saturday May 3, began in each sector with an opening meeting at which the video-taped message from the Pope was played and an introduction to the particular theme was given by the president of the sector. The delegates then went into their discussion groups where they spent the whole of the first day. During the day, the group leaders met frequently with their topic chairman to assess progress. At the end of the day, the leaders each prepared a report of the day's discussion for circulation to members of the group the next morning. They also conferred with topic chairmen about the ground covered in their discussions and the general directions being followed. The chairmen of the topics were then able to draw up agendas for the topic meeting on the next day.

Sunday morning, May 4, was spent in the host parishes of Liverpool. A bishop was the chief concelebrant in a parish Mass attended by delegates and the families who had offered them hospitality. The sector presidents came together for a Mass with the committee and then worked on the preliminary draft of the Congress Declaration. After lunch, the discussion groups met again for a brief session to consider the draft report prepared by their leaders and to finalise their submission to the topic. The rest of the session was then used for topic meetings. Various procedures were used in the different sectors but certain features were common. Where voting occurred, for example, this was always done by show of hands, and counting only took place when there was considerable

division, or when the issues or recommendations being considered were so sensitive that an accurate and detailed record was felt to be needed.

On Monday May 5, the topic groups met again for a brief session to consider the draft report prepared by the chairman and to finalise this for presentation to the sector. At the sector meeting which followed, the first to be opened to journalists and the media, each of the topic chairmen in turn submitted to the sector its topic report, including the recommendations proposed for acceptance by the sector. Where voting took place, it was again by show of hands and counts were only taken when considerable division was apparent or when the sensitivity of particular recommendations or statements required it.

To a large extent, this general pattern was followed by the sectors. There were some topics and sectors which adapted the timetable to suit particular circumstances or to allow for particular procedures. More precise details are therefore given in the introduction to the sector and topic reports.

There were a number of individuals or small groups in different sectors whose opinions differed radically from the majority of the delegates. Because time was so short, in each sector these were requested to submit their opinions in writing to the sector president in order not to impede the work of the topics and sectors. In some sectors, A, C, E, G, attempts were made to incorporate minority opinions into topic reports and for this reason recommendations appear in the reports which were in fact rejected by the topic or the sector.

Tuesday, May 6, brought together the delegates for a morning's plenary session at the Philharmonic Hall, for the reading of the seven sector reports by the presidents and for the presentation by Cardinal Hume of the Congress Declaration. The diocesan delegations then walked in procession to the Metropolitan Cathedral for the concluding Mass.

Post-Congress

Within a couple of weeks after the meeting, the seven sector reports were published by the Catholic Truth Society in a pamphlet entitled *Congress Report*. Accompanying the reports were the texts of both messages from the Pope, the homilies preached by Archbishop Worlock at the service of reconciliation and by Cardinal Hume at the concluding Mass, together with the Congress Declaration.

It had already been decided by the Bishops' Conference that it would meet in July and would make a public response to the work of the Congress. The bishops asked Archbishop Worlock of Liverpool to provide them with a draft document to help their deliberations. Congress delegates had already been assured that reports from sector, topic and dis-

cussion groups would all be carefully considered and any written submissions would be taken into account.

It quickly became obvious that the idea of a response from the bishops to the Congress was out of keeping with the profound experience of the People of God at Liverpool. The bishops were part of the Congress and had shared in its work. It became apparent that their contribution to the continuing process of renewal would be best expressed in the form of a message to the Church 'in light of the National Pastoral Congress'.

Archbishop Worlock gathered around him a small team to help prepare the proposed message from the bishops. The first task was to analyse in detail every piece of written material originating from the Congress. This was necessary in order to identify the main concerns of delegates, to eliminate overlapping between the sectors and to discover what gaps had been left in the treatment of pastoral issues. While this analysis was proceeding, sector presidents and the national committee were consulted, theological advice was taken and, when necessary, experts were called in to supply information to develop existing reports. As the shared reflection proceeded, it also became clear that the abundance of material could be shaped into three sections which, in fact, corresponded to the task set before the Congress by the Pope in his video-taped message to delegates (cf. *The Easter People*, n. 9). It became clear also how desirable it would be for the proposed message to be more than a theological and pastoral statement, but rather a sustained meditation on the major issues raised by the Congress. This would respond to the desire expressed in the Congress committee that the bishops should produce 'a praying document'.

The draft of the message was sent to all the bishops at the beginning of July. At the extraordinary meeting of the Conference from July 14-16, the document was first discussed in plenary session, then small groups worked through the written amendments and finally the Conference as a whole voted on the text, section by section. The agreed text was then published on August 19, 1980 as *The Easter People*.

In addition to the four observers from the Holy See who had been present at the Congress, the Holy Father had been kept fully informed by the bishops of the preparations for the Congress and was sent an immediate report of its outcome. On Saturday August 23 Pope John Paul II received in audience at Castelgandolfo both Cardinal Hume and Archbishop Worlock who presented him with copies of *The Easter People*. It was at this point that the Pope, who had 'welcomed this initiative in shared responsibility', was invited to make a pastoral visit to the Roman Catholic community in England and Wales at some time in 1982. The Holy Father readily consented and so the next stage in the process of renewal and commitment begins . . .

CONGRESS PUBLICATIONS

September 1978

Outline, purpose and programme of the Congress, together with a list of the members of the Committee was sent out to all dioceses and national organisations.

January 1979

Letter from the Committee bishops.
Introducing the Congress.
Priorities Leaflet.
Discussion Paper 1: Marriage and the Family.
Congress Poster.

Before Lent

Family Prayers for Lent.
Each bishop wrote a Pastoral Letter to his diocese explaining and commending the Congress to his people.

March 1979

Discussion Paper 2: The World of Work.
Discussion Paper 3: Growing in Faith.

May 1979

Prayer Card in English and in Welsh.
Whitsuntide Prayer Leaflet.
Discussion Paper 4: You and the Church.
Discussion Paper 5: A Question of Justice.

June 1979

Congress Mass, composed by Dom Alan Rees, OSB, of Belmont Abbey, published by Magnificat Publications: intended for congregational singing, already used in Choirs' Festival in Liverpool Cathedral at the end of June.
Congress Hymn, written by Luke Connaughton and Antony Milner, published by Mayhew-McCrimmon.

August/September 1979

Discussion Paper 6: Young People in the Church.

Discussion Paper 7: Unity Among Christians.

Discussion Paper 8: Catholic Education: A Partnership.

Assemblies for Primary Schools.

Young People and the Congress: A Discussion Handbook for Secondary Schools and Youth Groups.

Advent 1979

Way, Truth and Life: A book of services and prayers in preparation for the National Pastoral Congress. Published by Redemptorist Publications, compiled by Frs James Crichton, John Coventry SJ, Mgr Francis Gerard Thomas, and Mr Tom Coyle. Editor, Fr Tony Taylor.

Congress Poster: Building the Church Together.

1980

Congress Contact: Two issues published prior to the Congress, then on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of the Congress.

THE CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Archbishop Derek Worlock

Bishop David Konstant

Bishop Leo McCartie

Mrs Sue Chapman

Sr Enid Davies RLR

Mr Michael Foley

Miss Nicole Hodgson

Miss Patricia Jones

Mrs Myrna Lubin

Mgr Joseph Buckley

Mr Philip Duffy

Mr Julian Filochowski

Mgr George Leonard

Mgr David Norris

Fr Pius Smart OFM Cap

General Secretary: Fr Thomas Shepherd

Assistant Secretary: Fr Samuel Erskine SMM

DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS

Westminster: Fr Gerard Barry
Arundel and Brighton: Fr Stephen Hinde
Birmingham: Fr Geoffrey Tucker
Brentwood: Mgr Daniel Shanahan
Cardiff: Canon Edmund Mullins
Clifton: Mgr Joseph Buckley
East Anglia: Fr Emmanuel Sullivan
Hexham and Newcastle: Fr Leo Pyle
Lancaster: Fr Michael Kirkham
Leeds: Fr Arthur Roche
Liverpool: Mgr George Mooney
 Sr Magdalene Randall
Menevia (North): Fr James Webb
 (South): Fr Owen McGreal OMI
Middlesbrough: Fr Kevin Coughlan
Northampton: Canon Noel Burditt
Nottingham: Fr Paul Klee
Plymouth: Fr Bartholomew Nannery
Portsmouth: Mgr Patrick Murphy-O'Connor
Salford: Fr John O'Sullivan
Shrewsbury: Fr Kevin Byrne
Southwark: Fr Patrick Keaveny
Forces: Mgr Vaughan Morgan

DISCUSSION PAPERS

Discussion Paper Number One

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

The Christian family springs from marriage, and marriage reflects the loving covenant which unites Christ and his Church. Through that covenant, and by the loving way in which all its members work together, the family will show everyone that our Saviour is alive in our world.

Church in Modern World (Vatican II), para. 48

Look around the parish church, this Sunday any Sunday

. . . Mr and Mrs O'Connor, with four of their six children. Brian, the eldest, is away at college, and brings back ideas which make his father see red. Dorothy is not there either. She's newly married, and they're both in their teens. She has to help out with the family budget by working full time in a shop. She's expecting a baby and so far there's no possibility of a home of their own.

There's Mrs Price. She's having to cope with bringing up four-year-old John on her own. She looks tired: in need of a break. She lives on a new housing estate and feels painfully isolated.

Back two pews, and there are Mr and Mrs Bond, and they are still obviously in love, despite a lifetime of differences and difficulties. In their late seventies now, they are enjoying their grandchildren, provided that they keep their visits reasonably brief! Mrs Bond regrets that her family never now meets all together as a body. The old family of brothers and cousins and sisters, uncles and great aunts was a marvellous strength and support, and she misses it.

Suddenly, Mark Quidley interrupts her concentration on Father's sermon. He's a mongol, and her long-time friend at the Ladies' Guild where Mrs Quidley finds much support. No respecter of sermons, Mark pops up under the pew to give Mrs Bond an affectionate hug.

Mr Walsh is there too. His wife is not a Catholic, so he brings his two boys to church by himself. But his desperate problem is that he can't find a job. Mr and Mrs Walsh feel very insecure about the future and providing for the boys as they would wish.

And to all these different people, with their varied hopes and joys and pains, Fr Tinker is preaching on marriage. All of them, in different ways, must discover something of what it means to be channels of grace to one another, helping each other to grow nearer to God. Married couples are ministers to each other, God's own partners experiencing life more fully through God's real, yet mysterious help. Linked life-long, they aid one another to grow in a way beyond mere human ability. And they have to do this, as members of a society in which more than one marriage in four ends in divorce.

1. Family

- ★ What do we mean by family?
- ★ What does being a member of a family mean to you?
- ★ What is your role in your family? What are your hopes for the future (e.g., when you get married; when the children are grown up; when you retire)?
- ★ Do we listen to the needs of members of our family? How do we respond to them?

2. Marriage

- ★ Why do people get married?
- ★ What do people expect from marriage?
- ★ Why is marriage so difficult?
- ★ What are your ideas on marriage?
- ★ What is the difference between a Christian marriage and any other marriage?
- ★ What about mixed marriage?

3. Stress

- ★ 75% of married women work. What effect is this having on families in our parish?

- ★ Is the birth of a first child a time of stress?
- ★ What about isolated mums?
- ★ What about teenagers: (a) in their families; (b) in the parish?
- ★ Does the generation gap exist?
- ★ How can our parish help in these situations?

4. Help from our Friends

- ★ Should people be prepared for marriage? Where — at home? at school? in the parish?
- ★ What kind of preparation is needed? Who should give it?
- ★ At what time of life is it needed: e.g., pre-teens? during adolescence? during engagement? in the early years of marriage?
- ★ Do we in the parish care about families with special needs: e.g., with handicapped children; one parent families; families with dependent old people; families in danger of breakdown?
- ★ How do we find out who needs help, and what sort of help is needed?

5. Widening Circles

Christ can only act in the world through us. The Church exists for the world, and so does the family.

- ★ Have our families a special part to play in the parish and the community? What can families do especially well for others?
- ★ Do we listen to the needs of those around us in the community? How do we respond to them?
- ★ Do we play our part in service to the community in general? Should we do more? How?
- ★ Since the Church tells us that Christians should not do apart what we can do together, are we working sufficiently closely with other Christians on matters concerning marriage and the family?
- ★ What responsibility do we have for legislation affecting the family: e.g., financial laws (tax laws, family benefits); housing law; family law; child care law? etc.

Discussion Paper Number Two

THE WORLD OF WORK

What is needed is the active presence in factories and work-places of pioneers who are fully conscious of their double vocation — as Christians and as workers — and who are bent on assuming their responsibilities to the full, knowing neither peace nor rest until they have transformed the environment of their lives to the demands of the Gospel.

Pius XII

Look at people at Mass this Sunday, any Sunday.

Peter who works at a large factory with over 2,000 others. He finds it difficult to concentrate at Mass this morning because he has just heard that the factory is to be closed and he will be made redundant. He does not understand why but he is worried about how he and his wife and four children will manage when he joins the 1½ million who are out of work.

Mary is a typist and is expecting a baby soon. At the moment her family find it very hard to manage financially. She would love to stop working so she can be a full-time mother. But she has just heard about the new laws which say she can continue with her job and get maternity pay. This is a great incentive to stay at work but who is going to look after the baby and how will she cope with being a mother, a wife and a wage-earner?

Joe is a Shop Steward in his union. He will soon be having discussions with his employers about an increase in wages. If they don't get what they want the union will go on strike. Joe doesn't like the idea but he feels that the wages of himself and his workmates are far too low and not enough to bring up a family on. Where do his Christian principles come in?

Joan left school two years ago and feels she is gradually losing interest in the Church. She finds the atmosphere at work so bad that she can't live her faith in that situation. If ever she tries to influence things or

mention anything to do with religion they all laugh at her. So now she keeps quiet or even joins in so that she doesn't feel too unpopular. Religion seems OK in Church but it doesn't seem to have any place at work.

Harry is a personnel manager. He is unhappy about the fact that while so many are unemployed others are working lots of overtime. He feels it would be better to share the work out and employ more people. His colleagues think this would be too complicated and might affect the profits.

In his sermon Fr Jones tries to relate the Christian social teaching on work to these ordinary situations. He speaks of work as a collaboration with God in the work of creation, a means of personal development and a way of making a contribution to the community. Is this our way of looking at work?

See the Situation

- ★ Could we each say what our job is and where we work?
- ★ Are we and others we know happy at work — is our job satisfying or boring? What is our attitude to work? What about other people we know? Give examples.
- ★ What in our experience are the main problems, needs or opportunities facing working people in our area? e.g.,
 - Is there much unemployment? If so, who is affected? What are the special needs of the unemployed?
 - Do many people work shifts or do a lot of overtime? If so, how does this affect them and their families?
 - Any other specific needs in our area?
- ★ Do many women and mothers we know go out to work? What are the main reasons for mothers working — financial, social, other. Give *facts*. What are the effects on them and their families? What allowances are made for the fact that they have family commitments?
- ★ How many products that we use each day are made in other countries? Do we feel any sense of solidarity with workers abroad?

Judge it in the Light of our Faith

- ★ What do we think of the facts we have discussed? What things in our working lives are good and positive? What things are not so good?
- ★ Are there any things which offend the dignity of men and women? Is it important that we respect the dignity of the individual? Why?

- ★ What is the purpose of work? Is there more to work than just making money? What are the personal, social and religious values? As Christians what link do we see between our work and the Mass?
- ★ Why do people have a right to work? What are the personal and social effects of unemployment particularly on young people? What can be done to combat unemployment?
- ★ Are we sufficiently involved in our work place, in our union? What opportunities are there in working life to spread the Good News of the Gospel?

Act to make our situation more human and Christian

- ★ What can we do to make our working life more Christian?
- ★ What can our parish do to help people be more aware of their Christian responsibilities at work? e.g., start a YCW section or an FSA Action in Work group.
- ★ Some individuals have helped to organise job creation schemes to provide work for unemployed teenagers. Could your parish organise a scheme to provide jobs? Contact the Manpower Services Commission, Selkirk House, 166 High Holborn, London WC1V 6PE for further details.
- ★ The YCW organises a School-to-Work Service to prepare young people for work. In Greenwich Borough they have initiated a scheme which provides a special course of preparation for 1,800 young people. What can your parish do for school leavers?
- ★ Some parishes have a special Mass on the Feast of St Joseph the Worker to help people to see the link between their faith and work. What can be done in your parish to relate liturgy to working life?

Discussion Paper Number Three

GROWING IN FAITH

With renewed zeal we must build ourselves up by meditating on the nature and function of the Church, on its mode of being and acting. We must do this in such a way as to achieve that living communion in Christ of all who believe and hope in him. But, more than that, we must take care to do it in such a way as to broaden and deepen the unity of the whole human family.

First message of Pope John Paul II, October 1978

Look around the parish church this Sunday, any Sunday.

Mr and Mrs Philips are there with their three children. They have Peter and Joan in the primary school and they are very glad about their progress. The children seem to be growing up happily in their faith. Religion doesn't seem to be taught the same way these days, but much has improved. They feel part of it all — helping with First Communion and First Confession — accepting family responsibility. John is due to start school next term — perhaps they should be doing more at home to pray together and to talk more openly about Our Lord.

Mrs Parker has brought Walter, her handicapped boy, along. He seems to love it, but she wonders what other people are thinking and, as she looks at the Philips' children, she wonders how and when Walter could make his First Holy Communion.

Mary is there on her own. Nineteen now, she stopped coming to Mass for a while after she left school, but she's back now. She gets a lot out of the prayer group she got to know, but she doesn't relate very easily to the parish community. The mystery of the Mass appeals but, for her, religion is a direct experience of God and much of Church life seems irrelevant.

Maureen has brought her boyfriend Jim along for the first time. She's shy and proud at the same time. He's beginning to show an interest;

she doesn't know the best way to help him and wonders if it's too early to introduce him to Fr Andrews.

Mr and Mrs Cotton are apprehensive. Is Father going to spring yet another change on them this morning? Things aren't at all as they used to be. They're not sure where they are anymore.

And Fr Andrews prepares to talk to them all. He wants to get them to realise that what they share is a living gift from God. He'll try to explain that, while they believe the teaching of Jesus Christ, they should always be eager to understand more deeply. And they should also believe in him and entrust their lives to him. They ought to be keen to share this treasure with their children and loved ones.

But aren't more people drifting from the Christian Churches and how can faith survive if sin seems to triumph?

Here are some questions to help you consider the growing faith of the parish and how you can help.

Among the possibilities: to meet in small groups; to identify local needs; to pass on your findings within the parish and to your diocesan co-ordinator; to decide action locally.

Jesus is the Way

The Christian follows Christ

- ★ Have you made a conscious decision to follow Jesus Christ in your life? Did it come at one moment? Did it come gradually? Was it almost taken for granted from childhood?
- ★ Are you happy to leave your children to make their own choice? Would you encourage them to follow Christ? How?
- ★ What help do we expect of the Church in encouraging children to choose Christ's Way?
- ★ How do we set about helping our adolescents towards a genuinely Christian understanding of life at home, in school, in the parish?
- ★ Are there families with extra difficulties whom you feel need more help from the Church in their attempt to follow the way of Christ? What can you offer?
- ★ If you accept that Christ can guide us in everyday life to make right moral decisions, in what ways do you find this to be so?
- ★ Who is the happiest person you know? What is the secret of his or her happiness?

- ★ What can we do in our parish to share our way of following Christ with other Christians and non-churchgoing people?

Jesus is the Truth

The Christian trusts Christ

- ★ If Jesus puts his question to you 'And who do YOU say that I am?' what would be your reply? What demands does this make on your life?
- ★ Have we any truck with 'false gods'- If so, which ones?
- ★ Can you pray confidently to God knowing that he loves us and understands our needs ?
- ★ Can the group think how each sacrament is able to bring Christ's presence to bear on our lives?
- ★ What help does the parish offer regarding prayer for individuals, for groups, in the liturgy?
- ★ Of what is available, what do you value in the new? What do you regret in the passing of the old?
- ★ What can we do in the parish to encourage others to believe and trust in Jesus Christ? Are there practical ways of spreading the truth about Jesus?

Jesus is the Life

The Christian lives in Christ

- ★ What is life for? What do we expect of life, here, and hereafter?
- ★ How should the Church be trying to help adults respond to the message and the person of Christ? What can be done locally?
- ★ There used to be many more 'converts' than there are now. Can you think of reasons for the drop in numbers and the implication of any answers?
- ★ Does it concern you that fewer people now choose to become priests, brothers and nuns? What will this mean for the future of parishes? What can be done locally?
- ★ What contribution does the parish make to the life of people in the locality? Does the parish enrich their life in any way? Are we, as a Christian community, prepared to do anything about dehumanising conditions? Or the anti-life lobby?

YOU AND THE CHURCH

'I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me'. 'In him we live and move and have our being'. The laity should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests bringing to the church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation . . . Indeed if the needs of cities and rural areas are to be met, laymen should not limit their cooperation to the parochial or diocesan boundaries but strive to extend it to interparochial, interdiocesan, national and international fields.

Decree on the Lay Apostolate, 10

The O'Brien family are getting ready for Sunday Mass.

Mr O'Brien shouts loudly upstairs: 'For goodness sake get a move on everyone — I'm steward today. Are you one of the ministers for Holy Communion this week, Ann?' 'No, I'm next week', calls down his wife.

Twelve-year-old Alison is carrying her guitar: it is the week of the Folk Mass. Next week it will be the Sung English Mass. In the hall they pause for a moment. 'Oh, Simon, do rub your shoes with a tissue — they won't look too good on the altar'. Six-year-old Jane is humming to herself. 'What do you think we will make today?' she asks. This is because during the Liturgy of the Word, the children go out into the hall to read their own bible, sing, draw a picture of the Gospel story and make up their own bidding prayers; they come back into the church with the offertory procession.

At church, Mr O'Brien joins another man and a woman who are stewards with him. Their job is to welcome newcomers, give out newsletters and hymn books, and show people to seats. They also check that the readers, the servers and the girls who prepare the altar have arrived. If they haven't, they find others. They also find four people to take up the collection: different people do this each week. The young instrumentalists practise under their leader (aged 16), and mothers hurry in and out of the hall where the under 5's are already settled before Mass starts. There is the

cheerful buzz of a large number of people getting ready. Someone walks up to the lectern to set down the sheet with the bidding prayers — this week they have been written by the house group that meets in Oak Tree Drive; last week it was the turn of the choir.

Just on time, Father arrives from the other Mass centre in the parish. Everyone takes part in the Mass: prayer, music, silence, Communion under both kinds; a few notices are read; there is coffee after Mass. The Newsletter announces a disco in the hall for teenagers; a youth discussion at Father's house on Friday; a group for mothers and under 5's; a retired people's coffee morning; a meeting of the local council of churches; a prayer group in the quiet room; the starting up of a Justice and Peace group; two house groups meet this week and the Parish Council next week; the UCM are organising Bingo at the Old Folks' home; and the parish learns it raised £1 per head for the Cafod project over Christmas.

After Mass, people stay on to chat. 'Are you coming to the ramble this afternoon?' someone shouts. Father is talking to some newcomers, while the parish finance and maintenance committee wait to have a quick word with him — the two of them casting a critical eye on the roof . . . in this parish the laity have taken on responsibility for financial affairs.

This may not be the picture in every parish, but it is a picture of an actual parish — a parish of shared ministry: men and women, the old, the young, the practical, the intellectual — giving service, caring and sharing. St Paul talks of many ministries in the body of Christ; Vatican II talks of partnership between all in the mission of the Church.

Being the Church

★ How do people think of the Church:

- (a) some think of it as the building where they go to Mass.
- (b) some see it as an organisation that exists for the benefit of the people who belong to it, to the exclusion of others.
- (c) some see it as a family, whose members love and care for each other, spreading their love to other people.
- (d) in the Gospel, Jesus talks of the seed which grows into a mighty tree; of a vine with many spreading branches.

★ Do you think these ideas help us to understand the Church?

★ What would you say to describe the Church to someone? How would you explain what it means to belong to the Church?

Worship in the Parish

- ★ How do you as a parish pray together at Mass:
 - (a) what part do people take in the Mass?
 - (b) what responsibility do lay people have for the preparation of worship at Sunday Mass?
- How do you feel about this?
- What do you think of the Sunday Mass described in the story?
- In your parish, are there any particular groups who do not feel their needs for worship are met: e.g., young children; the old; the handicapped; teenagers; those disturbed by change.
- ★ Do other celebrations involve the whole parish: e.g., baptisms; marriages; funerals; Sunday evening service — how are these prepared for? How could their celebration be improved?
- ★ Some people say: 'I find it easier to pray to God in my heart. When I go to Church I am put off by the other people there.' What are your feelings about this?

People in the Parish Community

- ★ What do you think of the work of lay people and religious in the parish?

The people in the story achieve community by planning and working together.

How does your parish compare?

Do lay men and women share in decision making in your parish?

Should they play a greater part in this?

How could this be organised?

How do young people fit into the parish?

What about other special groups?

Do women have a special part to play?
- ★ Pope John Paul II says that the supreme task of the priest is the spiritual formation of people.

What do you think the real work of the priest in the parish should be?

What prevents him from fulfilling his main task as priest?

How can he be helped?

- ★ How can the bishop help the parish community to live up to its mission?

The Parish in the Community around it

- ★ The parish has a responsibility to the people in the area who don't go to any church. How would you describe this responsibility? What could be done to be more effective? What do you see as the obstacles and difficulties? How might these be overcome?
- ★ How does your parish work with the other parishes in the deanery and the diocese?
- ★ What are your relations with other Christian bodies in the neighbourhood?

Have you any suggestions as to how you can work better together?

- ★ What can we all do to make ourselves and other Christians more alive? What kind of changes do we need in our structures so that all of us can work together to make Christian people more nearly like Christ: so that we can become:

a praying community;

a teaching community;

an apostolic community;

a witnessing community;

a serving community.

Discussion Paper Number Five

A QUESTION OF JUSTICE

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Look around your parish church this Sunday

Most of those present live on a large housing estate. There is still a heavy debt on the Church, presbytery and parish schools. Some of this is cleared each year by the profits made by the parish club. The Third World group in the parish asked the club recently for help in raising money for Sister Imelda, a missionary ex-parishioner, who is appealing for a well and water pipes in Tanzania. The club has voted £50 from its annual turnover of £60,000. Sheila Jones, the secretary of the group, is smouldering with a sense of injustice.

Jim Cassidy is a shop steward at the textile factory nearby where cotton shirts are made. There is a permanent threat that the factory will close since shirts are being imported from India and other developing countries much more cheaply. Jim's union is lobbying Members of Parliament for stricter quotas to limit the imports in order to save their factory and their jobs. But he is in a quandary since the parish is twinned to a parish near Calcutta where similar textiles are produced. He knows that the livelihood of desperately poor workers elsewhere may be jeopardised if the lobby is successful.

On the estate, where there are some ten thousand people, there are no resident doctors or health clinics. The local hospital for the area is about to be axed. There is high unemployment in the area and the Job Opportunities Programme has not been able to cater for all the summer school leavers. So there is resentment and increasing vandalism. John Barber, who has one son in the Army, another unemployed and a girl due to leave school next year, is worried about the amount spent on national defence

and armaments. He has been urging that more Government investment be channelled locally but was challenged by the former curate whom the bishop has now sent to be a naval chaplain. The curate argued that the defence spending was more than justified to protect western freedom.

Lorraine Jeanne Baptiste is 9 years old. Her mother is a single-parent who comes from St Lucia in the West Indies. Her mother has tried to get Lorraine into the local school but the application was refused on the grounds that the mother is said not to be a practising Catholic. The girl is going to catechism classes with the local nuns in preparation for her First Communion but she does not really know the other Catholic children in the parish.

Fr Tom Burke, the parish priest, feels caught in the middle of conflicting interests in the parish. His ten-room presbytery is the only privately owned house on the estate; he is now the only priest there, and would like to put parish property to better use. Maureen Taylor (the eldest of six children living at home) wants to get married but can't move in with in-laws. She and her fiancé have asked Fr Burke to rent them a room temporarily. He is in two minds; the diocesan authorities are very reluctant; the parish council is divided. What should he do for the best?

The Neighbourhood

'You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all not only to the rich'.

St Ambrose

- ★ What kind of neighbourhood do we live in?
- ★ Do we know of people in the neighbourhood who are suffering hardship through no fault of their own? Who are they?
- ★ Is someone responsible? Is there always someone responsible?
- ★ Should we be doing anything about these injustices? What are we doing?

Race

'The gospel has a power to set us free, not just from sin but from what sin has done to our society'.

International Synod of Bishops: *Justice in the World*.

- ★ Racial prejudice can take many forms and is sometimes heavily disguised. What form does racial prejudice take in ourselves and in our community? What examples do we know of racial discrimination in

job opportunities especially for the young; in housing; law and order; how we run our schools?

- ★ Racist politicians and the National Front are given a lot of publicity in the media. They even draw support from among Christians. Why do you think this is so and how can we begin to combat this? Why is it always assumed that Catholics are agreed on issues like abortion and euthanasia but not on racism?
- ★ What are we doing personally and what should the Church do nationally to help create a society where all races can live in harmony?

Divisions in Society

Many people feel that Britain is still a deeply divided society. They see barriers between social classes, between people from different churches or religions, between supporters of different political parties and between the sexes. We should be conscious of these divisions and ask what the Church ought to be doing about them.

- ★ Do these barriers in our experience cause injustices?
- ★ Are the barriers erected by individuals or are they built into the system?
- ★ Northern Ireland is an example of the conflict caused by barriers and the resulting tensions. Is there anything people in Britain can do to hasten the just settlement of that struggle?
- ★ Do Christians have special responsibilities in industrial disputes? What are they?

Arms and Defence — Peace

'All warfare which tends indiscriminately to the destruction of entire cities or wide areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, to be firmly and unhesitatingly condemned'.

Vatican II: *Gaudium et spes*, para. 80

Britain is one of the top four arms exporters in the world. Many of these weapons are sold to poor countries. Again, at the present time, an average family of four in Britain is contributing £8.40 per week through taxes to our defence budget. These facts must raise questions among Catholics when successive Popes have denounced excessive

expenditure on defence, and when the Second Vatican Council condemned the use of modern weapons to wipe out large areas and kill huge numbers of civilians.

- ★ What are the links between being at peace with God, peaceful relations in the family, peace in the world? Can we have peace without justice? Can violence achieve justice?
- ★ What attitude should a convinced Christian take towards the current expenditure on defence?
- ★ Can we justify Britain's possession of nuclear weapons?
- ★ Is the sale of arms to poor countries morally defensible? Is it alright to sell anything and everything provided there is a market for it?

International

'Is man, as a man, developing and progressing or is he regressing and being degraded in his humanity. In men and "in man's world", which in itself is a world of moral good and evil, does good prevail over evil? In men and among men is there a growth of social love, of respect for the rights of others — for every man, nation and people?'

Pope John Paul II: *Redemptor hominis*

- ★ As the rich countries grow richer, poor countries grow poorer. Today 800 million in the developing world live in degrading poverty. Yet the prosperity of rich countries depends on the poverty and oppression of the developing world, and this involves us all.
- ★ What response are we prepared to make beyond contributions to charity?
- ★ What responsibilities rest on our government in addition to the aid programme?
- ★ What should we be doing in this parish? How can we involve others? What can the Church do nationally?
- ★ What can and should the Church do to promote justice between peoples and nations? Does the Church have a responsibility to protect all those people whose human rights and dignity are threatened, either by poverty or political oppression?

The Church

'No one can speak about justice who is not first seen to be just. So the Church must examine herself — the way she acts, the things she owns, the life styles she adopts'.

International Synod of Bishops: *Justice in the World*

- ★ What did Christ mean when he said: 'He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down-trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour'?
- ★ Discuss your reasons for agreeing with any of these statements:
'Religion and politics don't mix'
'Religion and politics sometimes mix'
'Religion and politics cannot be separated'.
- ★ Does the Church sometimes treat people unjustly? How?
- ★ Should the Church be more concerned with the needs of its own members or of the community as a whole? This should raise the deeper question of what the Church's role is in your local area.

Discussion Paper Number Six

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

The Church loses the young so easily from her communion and finds it so hard to get them back. Youngsters are not keen on the Church's institutions or on her present situation. Does she accept them as they are, as they are today and will be tomorrow?

Bishop Skvorc, Fourth European Bishops' Symposium

Young and old are the Church. Young people have their own particular contribution to make to the life of the Church as well as to society. Through friendly discussion and co-operation, adults and young people can profit by the gifts of each other's generation. The first section of this discussion paper is meant to encourage young people to look at their own needs; the second section sets older people or mixed-age groups thinking about young people and their problems. Each section will probably suit best the age group it was designed for but groups can obviously go on to look at the other half.

FOR GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE: 1, 2, 3, 7

1.

★ Do you feel part of the Church? What does it mean to belong to the Church?

★ Do you feel part of your parish? How can parishes involve young people?

Some parishes are very successful at involving young people; why is this?

- ★ Many young people are brought up as Catholics, but lose interest and stop going to Church when they are teenagers. Why does this happen? Does it mean they had faith and lost it? Or that they never had it? Can we do anything about it?

'Parishes are for older people. All the organisations are for older people. They're not interested in young people'.

2.

Some say: 'Where would you find out about religion if not at school?'

Others say: 'You learn real religion at home, because that's where you learn how to live'.

- ★ How do we come to have faith? Does RE help? Does worship in school help? Does the parish help?
- ★ Should children be taught religion at school? Where does the family fit in? Does the parish help?
- ★ Where can young people find an experience of faith?

'Mass is boring. RE is just for passing exams'.

3.

'We haven't any choice. We have to do what everyone else does'.

There are all sorts of pressures on young people today:

- ★ *at school:* to pass exams; to fit into the system.
- ★ *at work:* to get a job; to keep it, whether you like it or not.
- ★ *at home:* to do what your parents expect of you.
- ★ *from television, the press, etc.:* to conform to society's standards.
- ★ *from their friends:* to do what everyone else does.

Talk about each one of these. How do these pressures affect you and your group of friends?

4.

'Young people are so selfish. All they want to do is to enjoy themselves'.

- ★ Is this true? Are most young people just out for what they can get? Why? What example does our parish give of different attitudes?
- ★ Being a Christian often means having different values from the rest of society. Where do we get values from? How do we pass them on? Are we influenced by our friends? Our family? The media? Or what?
- ★ Is it difficult for young people to have Christian values? Is it possible to have real values without belief? Does the Church help people to live a Christian life? How?

5.

'Perhaps it's more difficult growing up than it used to be. Perhaps we should help more instead of criticising'.

- ★ People mature physically younger than they did 50 years ago. What sort of problems does this create?
- ★ Often young people feel their families don't understand them, or expect too much from them, and they need someone outside the family to whom they can turn. Are we doing anything about this at present? What should be done?
- ★ As individuals we may be aware of the needs of young people but is our parish community aware? What can we do about this?

6.

'The Church should make a more determined effort to get young people involved in its activities'. — 6th Former.

What does your parish do about this? How could this be improved?.

- ★ Do young people have a part in planning the liturgy?
- ★ Do young people have a part in parish decisions, on the parish council or in some other way?

- ★ Are the initiatives of young people encouraged in this parish?
- ★ Often young people are very willing to help others and to live a Christian life, yet they see no point in belonging to the Church. Do you agree with that attitude?

7.

'Helping the handicapped people at Lourdes was better than anything else I've ever done'. — 16-year-old.

- ★ What do young people have to offer to other people? Does the Church accept what the young have to offer? Does society accept what the young have to offer?
- ★ Are young people well-provided for in this locality? Do the facilities available meet their needs? Do they offer enough opportunity for young people to help others?
- ★ Are there any groups of young people locally who have special needs e.g., handicapped young people or immigrant young people or unemployed school leavers? Can we do anything about them?
- ★ What does the Church in this area offer to young people? Can our parish community do more to help young people and to involve them in helping others?

Discussion Paper Number Seven

UNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS

From the first day of my election as Bishop of Rome, I have considered as one of my principal tasks that of striving to bring about the unity of all those who bear the holy name of Christian. The scandal of division must be resolutely overcome, so that we may all fulfil in the lives of our churches and in our service to the world the prayer of the Lord of the church 'That all may be one'.

Pope John Paul II, June 1979

Imagine a group of fellow parishioners discussing Christian Unity. What views might they express?

1. John Golightly is an enthusiast. For him the great thing is that Christians now accept each other's Baptism. This means that all the baptised share Christ's life and are partners in the tasks he left his followers. The remaining differences seem unimportant.
2. Anne Doughty is one of the old school and proud of it. She is happy to follow the Pope's lead anywhere, but sometimes worries about a fall-off in loyalty to old values. What would the Forty Martyrs think of her attending a Unity Service in the local Anglican church!
3. Mark Hutchins is a convert to Catholicism. Following the Second Vatican Council he was put on a Commission to discuss doctrinal matters. But after a promising start, he feels that they have reached deadlock. He is frustrated and asks 'Why has the steam gone out of things?'
4. Jim Doyle has just been made redundant at work. He had been lapsed for some years but started going to church again recently when the local Churches jointly condemned the National Front and took a stand together about unemployment. This made sense to him, though he still cannot make much of the Sunday sermon.
5. Sister Margaret has been trying to start an ecumenical prayer group. She has had a mixed response. Some say that it doesn't matter what

you believe so long as you say your prayers. Others find it hard to pray together unless they know each other from church. She believes that only through prayer can they be united as Christians.

6. Tom Farrar is a Methodist who has been brought along by his Catholic wife. They long to be able to receive Holy Communion together. He goes with her and their children to Mass but feels sad and embarrassed when she goes to the altar rails and he remains in the pew. He wonders what others think of him.

Do you identify with any of these views?

Each case history provides a practical illustration of the ideas to be discussed in the section which bears the same number below.

1.

'By the sacrament of Baptism man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn into a sharing of the divine life . . . Baptism constitutes the sacramental bond of unity existing among all who through it are reborn. But Baptism, of itself, is only a beginning, a point of departure, for it is wholly directed towards the acquiring of fulness of life in Christ'.

Decree on Ecumenism, n. 22

- ★ What do we mean when we say that more unites Christians than can ever divide them?
- ★ '*Partnership in mission*' develops through Christians realising their unity in Baptism and their shared responsibility for bringing Christ to others. What are the local opportunities for such '*partnership in mission*?' What are the obstacles?
- ★ If work for Christian Unity is to be more than mere tolerance, what should we be doing to encourage it — all the year round?

2.

'May the blood of the Forty Martyrs heal the great wound inflicted on God's Church by reason of the separation of the Anglican Church from the Catholic Church . . . Their devotion to their country gives us the assurance that on the day when — God willing — the unity of faith and life is restored, no offence will be inflicted on the honour and sovereignty of England. There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and usage

proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church is able to embrace firmly her ever-beloved sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ; a communion of origin and faith, a communion of priesthood and rule, a communion of the saints in the freedom and love of the spirit of Jesus'.

Pope Paul VI, October 25, 1970 at the Canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales

- ★ Discuss the implications for us at local level of Pope Paul's words. How did he regard historic divisions and the heroic sacrifices of other generations? What kind of re-union did he seem to envisage?
- ★ Need personal loyalties stand in the way of the fulness of Christian Unity?

3.

'True ecumenical activity means openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense; but in no way does it or can it mean giving up or in any way diminishing the treasures of the divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught. To all who, for whatever motive, would wish to dissuade the Church from seeking the universal unity of Christians the question must again be put: *'Have we the right not to do it?'* Can we fail to have trust . . . in our Lord's grace as revealed recently through what the Holy Spirit said and we heard during the Council?'

Pope John Paul II: Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis*

- ★ What are the main truths of faith about which Christian Churches still differ?
- ★ In recent years, an International Commission of Anglicans and Roman Catholics has reached a measure of agreement on many questions of doctrine disputed in the past. Have there been any local efforts to study the Agreed Statements on Eucharist, Ministry and Authority? And with what result?
- ★ Is there a united approach among Christians to matters of the moral law? Where do we agree and where do we part company?

4.

'In our work together we must remember that we are not primarily specialists engaged in dialogue concerning doctrinal problems, nor are we ecclesiastical bureaucrats playing a political role to achieve an uneasy religious truce among conflicting Christian denominations. Our concern is pastoral, for our first responsibility is the well-being of men and women in our contemporary society. Its needs demand the achieving of unity'.

Cardinal George Basil Hume, OSB, Chantilly Conference 1978

- ★ Has the Church anything to say about today's social evils or is this political involvement?
- ★ What are the matters affecting the life of the community about which the local Christian Churches should speak and act together?
- ★ How realistic is it for us to say that Christians should never do apart what they can do together?

5.

'The faithful should remember that they promote union among Christians better when they try to live holier lives according to the Gospel. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word and the Spirit, the more easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement'.

Decree on Ecumenism, nos. 7 and 8

- ★ Are there ecumenical prayer groups in your area? How often do they meet?
- ★ What benefits can arise from sharing spiritual traditions and practices?
- ★ Has spiritual sharing led to other ecumenical collaboration, e.g., local covenants or agreements between neighbouring churches?

6.

'The widespread reflection of the Christian understanding and practice of marriage seems to emphasise that what differences remain between us are far outweighed by what we hold in common, and to remind us that, however important it may be to try to settle our differences, it is imperative that we witness together to the centrality of marriage in God's purpose for human community. Such common witness must not be seen as an attempt to hide our disagreements for the sake of ecumenical goodwill but as an urgent necessity if the world at large is to be influenced by the ideal and practice of Christian marriage'.

Growth in Understanding: RC/Methodist Report 1976

- ★ How far do the Churches share in the preparation and care of Mixed Marriages?
- ★ What regulations cover the place and form of a wedding where a Catholic marries a non-Catholic?
- ★ When may non-Catholic Christians be admitted to Eucharistic Communion in the Catholic Church?

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: A PARTNERSHIP

'All men . . . in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education . . . The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. The task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family but it requires the help of society as a whole . . . Among the various organs of education, the school is of outstanding importance'.

Declaration on Christian Education — Vatican II.

Look around the parish church this Sunday, any Sunday.

Mr and Mrs Murphy have two good children at the local Catholic school. They sometimes worry about the way things have changed in teaching religion at school. Have the changes done them good? Do the children still learn the truths they themselves were once taught at school? Do they love God more?

Behind them is Mrs Robertson with her fifteen-year-old son, Stephen. She wants him to stay on at the Catholic school but he is determined to go to the College of Further Education. She worries whether he will get there the degree of pastoral care which she believes he can only get these days in a Catholic school. She doesn't know what to do for the best.

Marie Jones only comes to church to avoid trouble at home. She's begun lately to find church boring, and Mass and the homily don't seem to have anything of value for her. She's looking forward to getting away from it all very soon. Yet she wonders if it's her fault or a phase she's going through. She misses the former security and gets confused over her new problems.

Mr Turner has not been a Catholic very long. He knows he was well educated by Fr Smith, the senior curate, but realises he has still much to learn. He wonders where he can get further formation and deeper grounding in his faith.

And Fr Johnson is running over in his mind what he wants to say to them all about religious education. He's anxious to remind parents about the importance of the Catholic school for their children. He wants to stress also that they continue to have an active involvement in the formation of their sons and daughters as Catholics. More than anything, he wants to remind them that they are all part of the People of God, and that, in every circumstance, they should try to act as witnesses to Christ. But Father worries about how to get his message over to people who seem to listen yet don't seem ready to respond. The Sunday Mass brings them together and yet . . . ?

All these people are in some way thinking about religion. They may not be experts but they feel deeply about the questions. Priests, religious and teachers have their specialised interest in education, but parents, too, have everything at stake because they have to see to their children's education. And the home, after all, is the first and, in many respects, the most important source of teaching and example. Again, education matters to everyone because everyone needs to go on learning, searching and growing all through life.

Here are some questions to help you discuss education

You may not have time or interest for them all. One or two may be the starting point for discussion spread over several meetings. Local discussions should lead to local initiatives and the beginning — or strengthening — of local cooperation. You should send a report of your discussions and action to the diocesan coordinator.

Home

- ★ Parents have almost total responsibility for their children until they start school. How should they prepare themselves for the baptism of their children? How can they lead them on the first steps in praying and loving God?
- ★ Once children go to school, how should parents continue to educate them?
- ★ Do parents, locally, have a chance to understand new methods of religious teaching? Is there any way they can discover how religion is being taught in our Catholic schools?
- ★ If your parish priest suggested that you should help to prepare your own children for First Confession, Holy Communion or Confirmation, would you be ready to assist? How would you set about it?

- ★ As parents, how do you respond to your children's questions and how do you help them to a love of God?

School

- ★ What do parents expect from a Catholic school? How should it be different from other schools?
- ★ How can religious education be given top priority in our Catholic schools?
- ★ In your area, what level of cooperation is there between parents, priests and teachers in the work of the Catholic school? What are the local difficulties?
- ★ Should practising Christian parents of other denominations have the opportunity of placing their children in Catholic schools to ensure that they are given a Christian education? Can the obvious difficulties be overcome?
- ★ What provision should our Catholic schools make for the less fortunate children, e.g., for the handicapped, for immigrants?
- ★ Should our Catholic schools and colleges be used for wider parish and community activities outside school hours?

Parish

- ★ Does anything need to be done locally to make the Liturgy of the Word more effective in shaping the attitude of practising Catholics?
- ★ Do the liturgical celebrations in your parish cater for the needs of the different groups, e.g., the young, the adolescents, families, etc.?
- ★ The bishop is the leader and teacher of the local Church. Traditionally he has taught his diocese through regular Pastoral Letters and through preaching in parishes, especially during Visitations. Is there any way to bring home to people today more effectively what the bishop is trying to teach?
- ★ What can a parish do for the continuing education of its adult members, not only on religious and spiritual matters, but on the issues which pose moral questions for people in today's world?
- ★ What is done, or should be done, by the parish for children in non-Catholic schools?

Young Adults

- ★ Do many young Catholics, the product of our schools, make a contribution to the Trade Unions, to local or national political life or to the academic world?
- ★ Do our schools, parishes and priests prepare young people for the world of work and of unemployment?
- ★ Are young parents sufficiently prepared for the responsibilities of bringing up children? What can be done locally to help them?
- ★ Should more Catholic resources, in buildings, money and manpower, be used for adult further education in the faith?

DIOCESAN REPORTS

The discussion papers distributed nationally produced reports from parish groups which were sent in to the diocesan co-ordinators. Each diocese, on the basis of these reports, drew up an analysis of its pastoral situation. Some of these reports from dioceses were lengthy; one was over one hundred pages long. The Congress committee provided for all delegates a summary of the diocesan reports, drawn up under the headings agreed on for the Congress agenda. The summary is not exhaustive; not every diocese replied in equal detail; more information was presented to the committee later. The following account is of great importance in that it represents grass-roots opinion from the parishes and demonstrates convincingly that the final shape of recommendations from the Congress was not manipulation by an unrepresentative minority but was instead the fruit of a process which was consistent from start to finish. It was prepared in February, 1980.

SECTOR A:

PEOPLE OF GOD

CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Desire for consultation and participation

Running right through the diocesan reports on this theme is a strong desire for more consultation and participation by the laity in the life of the Church.

This is not an attempt at a take-over, but a wish for the laity, as part of the baptised, part of the 'royal priesthood' of God's people to share more fully and responsibly in the life of the Church.

Two difficulties are seen, as one report says: 'The priest may not have the gift of leadership, nor the necessary formation to deal with delegation and consultation'. And not all the lay people are convinced that they have a role to play, and do not want to contribute to the living work of the Church.

WORSHIP: Mixed Attitudes

As might have been expected, attitudes to the present state of the liturgy are mixed: a few regret the passing of the Latin Mass and the old liturgy; many welcome the new, some with great enthusiasm, some with reservations.

Where there was not enough preparation and education for the introduction of changes in the liturgy (and this was felt to have been too common), there was often discontent and misunderstanding.

Where the liturgy was working well, and had been well introduced, there was a 'feeling of oneness between priest and people', great participation and good understanding. Creative liturgy takes a lot of work; help is needed at diocesan and deanery level for priests.

Individual rites

The new sacrament of the sick is especially welcomed. There is a lot of discussion about the age of confirmation: many think it should be given at a later age, and presented as the 'sacrament of adolescence'.

The Mass

The Mass is the centre of Catholic life. Awareness of this comes through all the reports. Some expressed fears that there is a decline in mystery and asked for more recollection and an increase in the periods of silence.

The new rite of Mass is widely welcomed: this is obvious from the reports. There is a desire for more lay involvement in the practical decisions about parish worship.

Communion under both kinds was widely desired.

What connection is seen between Mass and work: very little, say most people. How can this be remedied?

Suggestions

More education and information on liturgy is asked for.

More involvement of the laity in the preparation and celebration of the liturgy.

An annual Mass in parishes in order that married couples may renew marriage vows.

Anointing of the Sick to be carried out in the parish community, regularly.

Confirmation to be administered at a later age.

More use of communion under both kinds.

Feast of St Joseph the Worker to be highlighted, a suitable liturgy to be used to involve workers.

Find suitable alternatives to services which have fallen into disuse.

Make full use of the flexibility and variety allowed in the Church.

Prayer: Inadequate. Help needed

Everyone recognises how essential prayer is, but many feel that their prayer life is inadequate and ask for help and guidance on the subject. Positive encouragement for families to pray together is needed.

Suggestions

Instruction on prayer from the pulpit.

Extension and encouragement of various kinds of prayer groups.

Families might read and prepare the Sunday scriptures at home.

Home and school should make greater use of Christian symbols.

DIOCESE, DEANERY, PARISH

The Parish

A number agreed that 'many parishes are too big, and their size militates against unity and community. Population changes have made parish boundaries out of date in many areas, and redrawing of boundaries is needed'.

What do people want from the parish?

'Community spirit', 'family spirit', 'unity' — the desire for these is very clear. Great emphasis is given to the need for smaller groupings within existing parishes.

On-going consultation

The emphasis here is on the need for more consultation and involvement of the lay people, for genuine partnership in the work of the parish. This cannot be achieved overnight. It cannot be assembled to meet a particular need. It is seen to be an integral, constant developing part of the life of the Church.

Where there is genuine partnership, an 'explosion of life and a building up of community' takes place.

The priests are 'overburdened with administration': if this burden is shared with lay people, priests will have more capacity for their spiritual and pastoral role. The role of the parish council is vital in this respect. A few places are concerned about the difficulties that parish councils bring in their wake, but, in general, diocesan reports see them as essential.

The Parish: a caring community

Just as the Church is seen overall as a caring community, so it is seen that caring should be clearly expressed in the life of the parish.

Suggestions

Clergy to be freed of administration burden to allow for home visits.

A register of those with special needs, and those willing to help in each parish.

Special care for newly married couples.

Better link-up between Catholic schools and parish.

Pulpits to be made available to lay people on specialised subjects, e.g., marriage.

The Deanery

A new awareness of its value

Work for the Congress has brought home to many people for the first time the value of the deanery unit. It has come to be seen as a 'real unity'.

Congress preparation has paved the way for deanery councils, and many express the hope that this co-operation will continue after the Congress has met.

Helpful to the parishes

Where the deanery can be made effective, individual parishes benefit from the pooling of resources and talents. These deanery teams would be more effective than diocesan ones because of the smaller area to cover.

It is suggested that there should be deanery teams to deal with religious education, marriage courses, and help for handicapped and immigrant groups.

Diocese

We have moved from a 'fixed static church to one that is community based and flexible'.

This new vision is made explicit in the documents of the Vatican Council. Many of the laity do not understand this, and many clergy appear not to know how to implement this concept of church as community as opposed to institution.

There is criticism that the Church is still not seen as a 'community that expresses brotherly love' but rather an authoritarian body which fails to reach out to the country.

A desire for a process whereby peoples' complaints can be dealt with is implicit in many reports; one report explicitly asks for an ombudsman. People in many areas feel remote from their bishop, and do not always understand his role. Some say they would like to see more uniformity among the bishops.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Need for education

People are asking for leadership and instruction about Christian unity. There is a widespread desire for unity, but some confusion as to what kind of unity we are seeking.

Some think work for unity is our 'inescapable duty'; others fear a 'watering down of the faith' because of false ecumenism.

Unity is needed within the Church. Some urge that we should be working for that.

Mixed Marriages

There is anxiety about the term 'mixed marriage'; does it mean inter-church marriage, or inter-faith marriage? Concern is felt about what is done to help those who marry a non-Catholic, and that the Church is not sufficiently hospitable to the non-Catholic partner.

Unity and prayer

All see prayer as essential if there is to be unity; common prayer should be encouraged. Where there is already strong ecumenical activity and joint action, 'it leads to the enrichment of the respective groups and conveys more clearly the strength of the Christian message'. The report from the Forces remarked that they have a good experience of ecumenism because of the way they live and work together.

Obstacles

The majority are aware of our differences, and that there are obstacles, but it was thought by many that Catholics did not take unity seriously enough and that, perhaps, it was more a question of not being content with 'nice gestures'.

What is being done

In one area, an ecumenical mission was held. This proved very successful and led to the signing of a covenant to work and study with other Christians. In another where Catholics make up 3% of the population, they support inter-church services much better than others. In other areas complaints are heard that clergy are opposed to work for Christian unity.

Suggestions

More prayer with other Christians.

Non-Catholic partner in inter-church marriage to be admitted to the Eucharist on special occasions.

Inter-church co-operation in the preparation for mixed marriages.

More use of ecumenical chaplaincies, e.g., in industry.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP AND WITNESS

Not much Parish interest

It is evident from the small contribution on this topic in diocesan reports that it is not a burning issue. But many of the reports from groups and associations show a stronger awareness.

Sharing of wealth

There is little evidence of this: few parishes show a positive attitude to sharing. Materialism is seen as a threat, and a minority express a strong desire for a more just distribution of wealth.

Christian responsibility to poorer nations is recognised, but without practical suggestions as to how this should be done.

Learn from other Churches

One report suggests we should look to the other Christian churches to learn about commitment and witness and sharing.

SECTOR B:

PEOPLE OF GOD

ORDAINED MINISTRIES: EPISCOPATE, PRIESTHOOD, DIACONATE

Episcopate: What do Catholics want of their bishops?

It is clear that many Catholics look for much stronger leadership, both from individual bishops and from the hierarchy as a whole. They want to see their bishops more united, and more willing to speak out on important social issues, as well as on matters of personal morality.

A plea from one particular group:

'In all matters of justice and peace the guidance of the hierarchy is desperately needed because most Catholics lack a developed social conscience'.

Bishops should teach more: they should explain encyclicals and official teachings to their people: perhaps they should issue regular discussion sheets.

People want more *personal contact* with their bishops. More frequent and longer visits from the bishops, smaller dioceses to make this possible. The diocese should have a sense of identity, and spirit of its own: some reports want to make this possible.

Priesthood: What is the role of the priest?

There is a significant agreement on how people see the role and task of the priest:

He is to serve God's people, particularly by meeting their spiritual needs through celebrating the Eucharist, leading prayer, praying and counselling.

He is to *give leadership*: 'to inspire and animate the laity to fulfil their role in the life of the Church'.

He is to visit, make contact, build living relationships with the people; this is particularly important for families and youngsters.

Appointment of parish clergy

Concern was expressed by a number of people about the way priests are assigned to parishes, and lay consultation is felt to be needed in this matter.

Many feel that after a certain age clergy should no longer be expected to carry the responsibility for a parish; and that flexibility could be exercised in situations where young curates are stifled by older priests resistant to change.

Dissatisfaction with preaching

Great dissatisfaction with the content and quality of preaching is a constant feature of reports to the Congress. Sunday sermons are seen as a valuable educational opportunity which is often missed; sermons rarely relate to people's experiences.

Suggestions

Weekly parish discussions on the Sunday readings and an openness on the part of priests to accept comment and criticism from parishioners. A distinct feeling exists that priests should give greater encouragement to lay people to use their talents more. Many stress the importance of fostering the right sort of relationships within parishes.

Some see a need for a change of attitude on the part of clergy so that they become more sensitive, open to new ideas and above all willing to listen and to share responsibility with lay people. A few expressed concern that the life style of clergy should not be middle class or remote, but open and challenging.

More small groups such as house groups and prayer groups may help priests to come closer to laypeople.

If priests live in community, it might be easier to reach a more open life style.

Shortage of clergy

Many Catholics are anxious about declining numbers of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It was felt that one reason may be that neither the image, nor the reality of priesthood today, challenges young people who need to 'see clearly the image of Christ in his close followers'.

Suggestions—Team ministries

A small minority proposed that priests should be released from the obligation to celibacy, but even those emphasised that a celibate priesthood should also be retained.

Several individuals felt strongly about priests who have left the active ministry for different reasons and who experience difficulty in finding a new role in the Church. Many of them are still loyal to the Church and wish to work within it but feel that the Church does not accept this. They ask for a reconsideration of their position.

Diaconate: Mixed feelings

Some reports state clearly that there is little point in having deacons except where there is acute shortage of priests. Others acknowledge that the number of deacons is likely to increase in the future, but do not find this an exciting prospect.

Role of Deacons

Some see the role of the deacons positively. They see their main role as pastoral work: ministry to the housebound, the elderly, catechesis and marriage preparation, witness in secular situations. Worker deacons are seen as an alternative to industrial chaplains.

Not many saw a significant liturgical role for deacons, preferring to see a larger role for lay people.

Suggestions

Coordination at national and diocesan level on the formation of deacons.

Consultation about suitable candidates for diaconate.

THE COMMUNITY AND OTHER MINISTRIES

The Parish: ministering community

The sense of the parish as a ministering community is very strong in the reports and can be summed up in three principles which were frequently stated and reaffirmed:

- ★ Every parish should grow to be a caring community and not just an 'association of Mass-goers'.
- ★ All of the members of a parish should be involved in caring for those in need, both within the community locally, and within the parish.
- ★ All the members of the parish are jointly responsible for its caring ministry.

How can the parish become a caring community?

Many ways of helping this to come about are suggested. It is obviously of great importance that members of the parish should know each other, be aware of each other's needs.

Suggestions

Parish censuses; socials, good parish newsletter; visiting by all members of the parish, not just the clergy.

Many would like to see smaller parishes. Many see a solution to the present size of parish is to develop a sense of community through small house or neighbourhood groups.

Suggestions

Resources to be made available to encourage neighbourhood groups.

Some have the sense that parish organisations are being superseded by small flexible groups; some regret this development, while others see it as a sign of growth.

Ministry of hospitality

Considerable emphasis is laid on the ministry of hospitality, especially to newcomers and strangers.

Suggestions

Parish introduction schemes, linking families or individuals.

Regular invitations through parish newsletters, street stewards to welcome newcomers; house blessings; coffee after Sunday Mass.

Apart from specific actions of this kind, some suggest that all parish events should be open to the neighbourhood, so that the community life of the parish merges with the life of the local community.

Ministry of caring

This is seen as a high priority for Catholics, it is the 'corollary of worship' and part of the mission of the Church.

Some groups feel that, wherever feasible, ecumenical cooperation should be encouraged and joint street warden schemes are one possible way of putting this into practice.

A more flexible use of church premises is asked for, particularly schools and empty buildings, and also a rethinking of priorities on the use of resources in which apostolic purposes could be given priority over purely social purposes.

In particular, the parish community needs to care for:

- ★ The elderly and housebound, immigrants, the unemployed.
- ★ The mentally and physically handicapped.
- ★ Young families, one-parent families, families under stress, young people.

Parish and local community

A further dimension seen by some groups is that the parish community should strive to deepen the sense of community in the local area, and so enrich the quality of life for all local people. Many assume that Catholics should involve themselves in local affairs. Inner city areas were felt to be of particular concern; a few requests were made for pastoral strategy to cope with these. Parish communities should try to ensure a Christian presence and involvement in local action groups, on issues such as housing, race relations, and on councils, community associations and other special action groups.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Their role in the life of the Church

Since Vatican II religious orders have extensively reviewed their way of life and redefined their particular apostolates. A considerable change of outlook has resulted.

They have gradually reinterpreted their role in the life of the Church and many communities have explored new possibilities for their work.

The new potential offered by religious communities is not widely understood in parishes.

The work of sisters in parishes

Where sisters have worked in parish ministry, a much more positive response is often found, urging their involvement in all aspects of parish life.

Many sisters now live in small open communities within the parishes and this seems to be very welcome. They contribute to the life of the parish in many ways, for example:

- ★ Preparing liturgy, especially with children and young people.
- ★ Preparing children for the sacraments.
- ★ Working with the mentally handicapped.
- ★ Marriage preparation and family support groups.

It is felt by a number of people that religious can help the parish to deepen its own sense of community by the witness of their life and involvement. They can also do this by stimulating and leading small groups such as prayer groups, house groups or study groups.

The future

While many lay people urge the greater involvement of sisters in parish life, religious communities themselves ask that much more practical support be forthcoming from clergy and bishops.

There is a lingering feeling that religious orders are still going through a period of uncertainty and instability. A minority feel that religious are still over-concerned with material security and continuity of the Order.

Great concern is felt over the lack of vocations, and a majority would like to see the reconsideration of the whole question of how vocations are fostered in the Church.

Comments are frequent to the effect that families, schools and parishes should find more ways of encouraging young people to consider religious life or the priesthood as a serious alternative. The role of priests is felt to be particularly vital. Suggested lines of action include: more prayer, vigils, monthly masses, vocations exhibitions, 'Caring Church' weeks, open days in convents and seminaries. One report calls for 'an overall diocesan pastoral and educational strategy of which vocations promotion would be an integral and harmonious part'.

LAY PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

Growing awareness

Lay people appear to be more aware than they have ever been of their 'right and duty to make a full contribution to the life and mission of the Church'. The enthusiastic way in which many have participated in the Congress and found it to be valuable is a measure of this awareness.

Many do not see why they should not share responsibility for meeting each other's spiritual needs and act upon this by organising and leading prayer groups, retreats, vigils, pilgrimages, and similar activities.

In this they see themselves as working in close cooperation with their priests whose role of leadership and presiding at the celebration remains central.

Parish catechesis

This too is an area where lay people feel a special responsibility and competence. Many reports call for lay catechists.

Suggestion

A team of trained catechists and discussion leaders to be built up in each deanery.

Special ministers of the Eucharist

Some view this development with misgivings, but on the whole it is welcomed.

Suggestion

The commissioning of special ministers should take place in parishes and deaneries to emphasise the relationship between special ministers and the parishes they serve.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Opinions vary on this issue. Parish and diocesan reports on the whole show a comparative lack of interest in it; but reports from special groups and organisations submit firm proposals and strong comment.

Discussion urged

There is one central theme in the few reports received on the question: that the ministry of women should have 'full and open discussion'. 'The Church must find ways to accept and to use to the full the gifts and talents of women; without this, the ministry of the Church is incomplete'.

Ways in which women can exercise ministry

At present many women feel they are only called upon to do catering and domestic work in the Church. They want to participate fully in decision making in parish life.

Their ability to care for people should be channelled into a pastoral ministry with the elderly, the handicapped, the sick.

They should exercise a 'rightful role in the worship of the Church' by being allowed to serve at the altar, encouraged to read, to preach, and to act as special ministers of Holy Communion.

Women and the Ministries

Some feminist groups feel that the Church's attitude to women is unjust. They wish to see some form of ordained ministry open to women.

The groups propose *the diaconate* as an appropriate ministry for which there is scriptural and historical precedent.

With regard to the ordained priesthood, the same minority groups feel that the Church does not have the right to deny women the possibility of a vocation, and feel that potential vocations should at least be tested.

Although at present only a minority of Catholics would like to see women ordained, many more would like the question to be discussed and opportunity given for honest exchange of views on the issue, at all levels in the Church. In this way an informed Catholic opinion could gradually develop.

The changed status of women

There is a strong sense in some groups of women that the Church does not acknowledge the changed status of women in modern society and their potential to fill roles other than those of wife and mother.

They feel that this prejudice is reflected in Catholic moral teachings, which sometimes fail to take into consideration the feelings and experiences of women in contemporary society.

SECTOR C

FAMILY AND SOCIETY

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

1. Causes of marriage breakdown

In England and Wales, between a quarter and a fifth of marriages entered into today are likely to end in dissolution. It is with the evidence of this before them, in the lives of families they know, that the diocesan reports identify the following causes of stress in marriage:

- (a) Materialism: all reports mention the pressure to have everything, which leads parents (and often children) to work long hours and is divisive of the family group. Where families are poor and unsuccessful in the struggle to achieve prosperity, the stress is just as great.
- (b) Housing shortage, the cost of housing, the type of housing available for families to rear children in.
- (c) The dispersal of the wider family group, which means that there is no absolutely dependable fall-back when stress arises.
- (d) Unemployment, especially in middle age, when it is difficult to cope with.
- (e) Personal qualities, for example:
 - ★ the youth of the couple at marriage. Spiritually and emotionally immature, economically vulnerable, partners in a marriage contracted before the age of 20 are more likely to end in failure.
 - ★ personal inadequacy, which may show itself in alcoholism, violence, selfishness.
 - ★ a bad experience of marriage in the partner's own family is bad ground on which to build a new marriage.
 - ★ unreasonable expectations of marriage, particularly in sexual matters, but also economic and emotional expectations.
- (f) The surrounding social climate and present day living habits cause stress. Marriage often seems to be under attack
 - ★ it is not always the norm for families to eat together — they may all work at different hours; their housing may make it difficult to sit down at table together;
 - ★ the press, cinema, television present a picture of human behaviour which is very different from the qualities needed for a stable Christian marriage;
 - ★ divorce is becoming increasingly accepted as the way out of marriage problems; people live together outside marriage as a matter of course; the birth of children is not necessarily associated with marriage between its parents — Catholic citizens cannot isolate themselves from these influences.

(g) Special occasions of stress during a marriage:

- ★ the birth of a first child, and of subsequent children, is seen as a source of emotional upheaval; often of financial difficulty, if the wife must stop earning; often of overcrowding in unsuitable accommodation.
- ★ when children are adolescent, if there is friction, this can cause stress between the parents;
- ★ contraception: the whole issue of contraception is dealt with below, but it is frequently noted that ambivalence, guilt and resentment about contraception is a cause of stress in Catholic marriages.

(h) Getting help: people do not ask for help when troubles arise, and outsiders do not know when it is needed.

2. Contraception and birth control

Almost every diocesan report raised this question, some rather circuitously and cautiously, but the majority in detail.

The general request was for the Church to reconsider the implications of *Humanae vitae*; and, in the pastoral situation, to clarify what is seen as a confusing and unclear state of affairs in which contraception is forbidden in principle but the 'informed conscience' can find reason for it.

People do not in general understand this, and find it a dishonest situation.

Most reports reject the forbidding of contraception: they find it unacceptable.

Some dioceses, however, ask that the teaching be reaffirmed without equivocation.

Many Catholics have a crisis of conscience about contraception: it is fairly widely practised; scrupulous people leave the sacraments because of this; other people sort out their own attitudes, remain at the sacraments, but feel ill at ease.

The lack of pastoral guidance is keenly felt.

It is frequently remarked that priests are unwilling or unable to discuss the issue, so that individuals are left to their own guidance without help.

The Church seems, to some, to be not a caring mother, but a hard taskmaster, in this matter.

It is stressed in the reports that couples are not irresponsible or selfish in their attitudes to having children.

As one report says: 'couples are not careless in their decision, but want to be faithful to the needs of all parties: their partner, children, church, society'.

3. Admission to the sacraments of divorced and remarried people

Almost every report makes an urgent plea for a re-examination of present policy on this matter. A new pastoral strategy should come from the bishops, with special consideration of the spiritual needs of divorcees.

People cannot understand the rigidity of the Church in this regard: 'Jesus would not refuse to come to them. The Church forgives anything, even murder, but not remarriage': this feeling is echoed in many reports.

Reports ask for:

- ★ parishes to give special support to divorcees, and special help for the children of divorced marriages; a blessing on the second marriage; and uniformity of pastoral practice throughout the country.

4. Mixed marriages

Mixed marriages are viewed with suspicion and concern in these reports, despite their frequency. It is felt that they cause particular difficulties between partners, can cause confusion to the children in religious matters, and may be one reason why people do not seek help when it is needed.

Many suggestions are made to help mixed marriages:

- ★ a positive pastoral policy towards them is urged;
- ★ preparation for the marriage should be inter-church;
- ★ inter-church support for the marriage after the ceremony.

- ★ inter-communion in each other's eucharists where both are practising.

5. Special anxieties of parents

Apart from the general pressure on marriage in our society, felt by all reports, and the particular problems of young people and others with special needs, parents, even in happy marriages, expressed concern in several areas:

- ★ firstly, the lapsing of teenaged children in practising families is a source of anguish to many;
- ★ the unemployment of young people, with subsequent delinquency or instability, distresses parents who cannot help the situation;
- ★ anxiety about what is happening in the Catholic schools, how religion is being taught, is common;

Where there is marriage breakdown, parents express concern about its effect on the children.

6. What can be done to help families

This is certainly the most extensive part of each diocesan report, and a surprising degree of unanimity emerges as parish groups consider what they can do to help families live a Christian life.

The areas for action are three: what can be done by the parish or local group; what is better tackled by the deanery; and what needs to be done at national or diocesan policy level, by the bishops.

(a) *Long term teaching on marriage*

Every report stresses the need for education in faith in every area of the Congress work, but none more so than in the area of marriage preparation. Catholics need to be taught about the meaning of marriage and its responsibilities. They need both *human education* in psychology, financial and economic matters, child rearing; and *religious education*: they need to be taught the sacramental theology of marriage, its central role in the

mission of the church, the Christian vocation to marriage, and about the Church's teaching on divorce and annulment.

This was stressed many times. Catholics do not understand the difference between divorce and annulment in the eyes of the Church.

This teaching should be done by the *family*: from an early age onwards, both by word and example; by *the schools*, who must educate in relationships and not just in biology, and who must face up honestly to the church's teaching on moral issues; and by the *parish and local community*, by talks for young people, by work in youth clubs, retreats, special days, youth Masses, all of which will need financial support; and through sermons, a much neglected means of teaching.

(b) *Immediate preparation for marriage*

Parish or deanery provision must be made for pre-marriage courses, which should be both practical and spiritual.

Many of the reports would make attendance at such a course obligatory before a couple would be allowed to marry — others suggest caution in doing this.

These courses should be ecumenical, given the number of mixed marriages.

(c) *Education after marriage*

Almost every report stresses the need for education after marriage: in the early years, young couples should be invited to share their experiences, to discuss their vocation with each other.

The value of Marriage Encounter and the CMAC was widely recognised. Local help is also needed, and more local counsellors were suggested.

A 'guardian couple' to make friends with each newly married couple in a parish were suggested; and contact families for each family with a newly baptised baby, to provide support during this critical period.

(d) *What should be taught?*

Many reports stressed that the content of teaching on marriage should be positive: not just the do's and don'ts of marriage, but the joy of happy marriage should be taught; a theology of the marriage covenant is needed; the mission of the family as a centre of love and hospitality reaching out into the community; a positive teaching of the meaning and strength of the sacrament.

(e) *Parish support systems*

Parishes can do a great deal to help marriages in trouble; top of the list of needs is *information about where help can be got*: listing phone numbers and addresses in the parish porch for the helping agencies; setting up a 'samaritan' type phone service; street committees, to keep contact with all families in a street or block of flats; lay visitors, as well as clergy visitors; parish counselling teams — these are all proposals, many of which are already in practice in one diocese or another.

The need for sensitivity and delicacy was urged; intrusion into other people's problems can be counter-productive.

(f) *Help from the parish liturgy*

The communal prayer of the parish was seen as a strong support for families in an area, and many suggestions were made as to means of using the liturgy to provide strength and growth. For example, sermons should be preached on marriage; there should be betrothal services, an annual service at which marriage vows are renewed; half-day retreats for couples together, with adequate child-minding back-up; family Masses, house Masses, preparation for baptism groups where families with new babies meet together to prepare for the baptism; house blessings; family days; families to do the bidding prayers and the offertory procession as a unit at Sunday Mass; a good liturgy, well-prepared, at every marriage and baptism.

Finally, an occasional, or a regular, non-eucharistic service, in which non-Catholic partners in mixed marriages could play an active part.

(g) *Help in the education of children*

Parents want to be involved in the school's teaching of religion, and not to feel excluded from it. Where there is no school, parish and family must share together the responsibility for educating children in faith.

The parish needs to find ways of involving young children — the under 10's — in parish life, and then the pre-teens, and then the teenagers.

The parish should be constantly re-assessing how it does this, not settling into a routine of how things have always been done.

(h) *Help to compensate for loss of extended family*

This is especially needed for the families of migrants; where mothers are at work; with teenagers who may respond better to adults outside their own family; for isolated mothers with young children.

The sort of help envisaged could be summed up as hospitality: toddlers afternoons, babysitting circles, coffee after Mass; and visiting the elderly, new parishioners, young mothers.

In all of this it is urged that the parish be aware of what is done in the district as a whole, work with the local social service units, the local welfare groups, other church groups, wherever feasible. Parishes should develop understanding of local government agencies and the social security systems.

(i) *Legislation/public action*

While not every report touched on this subject, many recognised that 'unless we can influence general public opinion to the value of marriage and the family, our efforts will not be very effective'.

Action was felt to be needed in these areas: reform of the Rent Act; changes in family law and divorce law; abortion law reform.

Catholics should be active in local government and unions: 'Legislation affecting the family is our responsibility' said one diocese.

Building societies who require couples not to have children for a certain number of years before they will grant a mortgage should be opposed; more part-time work opportunities are needed

for mothers; a housewife wage should be paid to women who care for their own children.

YOUNG PEOPLE

What do the young themselves seek?

From life in general, they seek jobs; personal happiness, a happy marriage; peace and justice; self-fulfilment; independence; leadership; respect from other age groups; stimulus from adults; an awareness for and care for those in need.

Specifically, from the Church, they ask participation. They want the Church to recognise what they have to offer, and to draw upon it.

They want to be involved in decision making, liturgy planning, social and caring activities.

They look for good celebration of the liturgy, which they want to participate in, and to enjoy. They would like special youth retreats, special youth days, a youth leader in every parish, and inter-parish youth meetings.

They question the need for Catholic schools or the value of the religious education they receive at school; and they ask whether the parish as it exists at present serves a useful end.

The problems of young people

Young people identify many problems that particularly affect them in our society: they are over-stimulated by study which has no relation to the world of work; parents and teachers exert great pressure on them to pass exams; unemployment leads to family stress and personal disillusion.

They feel the divisions of the adult world, e.g., in class and race divisions; they are exploited by the press and TV; housing problems cause them to leave areas in which they grew up; separate youth facilities in clubs often isolate them from other age groups.

As far as the Church goes, young people feel they are not taken seriously; they feel an overwhelming ignorance of the Christian message; find the Mass boring; find parish adults, lay and clerical, apathetic and indifferent to them.

They see the Church as a group of self-righteous people, and they don't like what they see. They cannot relate the Church's moral teaching to their own living.

This is a depressing picture, but the other side of the coin is:

What do young people ask of the parish?

They ask to be involved in the caring work of the parish. They ask more opportunities for young Catholics to meet each other, perhaps at deanery as well as parish level.

They want long-term friendship with parish clergy who really try to get to know them.

They ask for liturgy which they can organise, both for their own groups, and for a full share in parish liturgy as a whole.

They ask for a proper place on parish councils and other decision taking bodies. House Masses, active youth clubs, small apostolic groups should be common practice.

Beyond the parish

A youth evangelisation programme is needed urgently; education in theology of the sacraments and in Christian living, through the parish, not the school: diocesan, if not national, support would be needed for this.

A national youth pastoral policy, with a full time director, is urged.

More facts are needed: a survey of why the young do not get involved in parish life; of how the community divides into age segments (see what old people had to say about their own segregation); and of why the young lapse.

SPECIAL GROUPS

A number of special groups was identified, although few of the diocesan reports paid very much attention to these groups:

Old people: their isolation because of health and housing, the segregation from other age groups into pensioner's clubs; and their desire to remain independent, which often frightens away friendship, were mentioned. They feel neglected and unwanted.

Handicapped/deaf people: more effort is needed to involve them in church life; more religious education provision is needed; special Masses with a social gathering afterwards should be held; dioceses should set up special day centres or residential homes. Co-operation with the DHSS should exist whenever suitable, and help for families is needed.

One parent families: positive discrimination in favour of them should be exercised in every parish; the national groups, e.g., Cruse; Gingerbread,

should be helped and their advice sought on local cases. Prejudice must be overcome about the divorced and the unmarried, and a compassionate attitude must be developed. A parish group should actively look for those in the area who need help.

SECTOR D

EVANGELISATION

'The Church is an evangeliser, but she begins by being evangelised herself, by constant conversion and renewal, in order to evangelise the world with credibility'. Many of the reports echoed these lines from *Evangelii nuntiandi* when they remarked on the need for personal conversion before we can spread the Good News. But first they dealt with the bad news — the obstacles and problems in the way of conversion.

'The majority of Catholics make no conscious decision to follow Christ, they were brought up to believe in him' — the result is not exactly apathy but a lack of get-up-and-go which is seen by some reports as being the first difficulty to overcome.

Another difficulty which is frequently mentioned is lapsing — that the number of people who no longer come to Church saps confidence within, makes evangelisation more difficult: 'we cannot spread the Good News to others if we are losing so many from within' — and yet also provides a special area of evangelisation for the Church — 'We have a responsibility for the many who have left the fold but not the Shepherd'.

A number of reports deal with the reasons for lapsing, many of which are similar to reasons given for there being so few converts. Among those most commonly mentioned are: the growth of materialism and the lack of interest in the things of the spirit; less emphasis on the one true church; less distinction between religions; 'softening on key issues'.

Quite a number of reports show special concern about the number of young people who are lapsing from attendance at Mass. This is seen as something which must seriously concern the NPC and which will also cause serious problems for the future.

Responsibility for the Lapsed

The good news on this front is that in the reports which dealt with this problem there was a recognition of responsibility for the lapsed and also of the need of a special type of approach to them.

Several reports stressed the need for parishioners and priests to have a welcoming attitude when the lapsed Catholics came to church on such occasions as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

An attempt could be made to help them if it was found that a number were interested, and could be gathered as a group, and helped by knowing that others were also facing similar problems.

One report suggested that the whole approach of the Church was too vague, and that we need to analyse carefully the reasons for lapsation and to plan both to combat it and to reclaim those who lapsed — and that these plans needed to be very specific.

Spreading the Good News

In dealing with the spreading of the Good News to those who have not yet heard it, reports again deal both with obstacles and with possibilities. Obstacles — once again let's take the bad news first and deal with the negative points. The main ones indicated are:

- ★ Lack of spiritual foundation in prayer — which a number of reports see as a fundamental obstacle.
- ★ Lack of courage in speaking the Good News.
- ★ Lack of knowledge — both of doctrine and of what the Church is doing outside people's own locality.
- ★ 'Failure to preach the Gospel in a way which people can understand'.
- ★ The Church is too inward looking ('like a club') and too concerned with bricks and mortar and too little concerned with people.

While the difficulties are recognised the general tone of the reports is far from pessimistic. So here are a couple of quotes to usher in the good news.

'In general people of deep faith seem to have found great happiness. It is born of the conviction that Christ is the Way, Truth and Life.

'Once the lesson is learned that life is about living, dying and rising with Christ, then the peace and happiness of Christ begins to take over'.

'The Promised Land is already among us, it is very near. Every act of love, every return to truth and justice, every moment of joy and peace, patience and goodness, happiness and liberation, offered to others is a crossing over into the Promised Land. That is how we enter it and open the door of hope to all the peoples of the world'.

Congress as Opportunity

Perhaps the most important item of good news is that so many of the reports see the National Pastoral Congress as a great opportunity for renewal of the whole People of God in England and Wales and as a great impetus to evangelisation.

Coupled with this is recognition that evangelisation is the responsibility of all, not just priests and religious.

The reports indicate the great potential for evangelisation, that so many people recognise their responsibility and are eager to be involved. Many practical ways of evangelisation are indicated in the various reports. For instance:

- ★ Catholics should be genuinely concerned for the people of the locality, trying to see their neighbours through Christ's eyes. We should accept them and not judge them.
- ★ When Catholics meet others for 'secular' purposes, there are opportunities to influence others by example and by words. We should be prepared to talk about our faith to others (we are still often lacking in confidence on this point). We score well with ideas but are poor in action. While not pushing religion, people can be alert to talk about it tactfully and prudently when an occasion arises.
- ★ More parish missions are asked for especially in multi-cultural parishes, as they offer an opportunity for immigrants to have closer contact with priests of their own culture.
- ★ Promote 6th Form retreats and weekends because they provide a supportive and encouraging atmosphere where participants can meet like-minded people.
- ★ Attract young people by meaningful liturgy and homilies. It is counter-productive to preach a God of love and then give them an image of a stiff and starchy Church.
- ★ Read, discuss and practice *Evangelii nuntiandi*.
- ★ Ask in public libraries for good Catholic books to be added to the catalogue.
- ★ Use our talents to make up the richness of the Body of Christ (parable of the talents). First we must be pruned (parable of the vine). The work of evangelisation will go on quietly (parable of the leaven). Balance this against the fact that our light must shine before all men (parable of the lamp on the lamp stand).

The essential links between preaching the gospel and 'promoting in justice and peace the true authentic advancement of man' are pointed out by several reports, and almost every diocese stressed the importance of the Third World and Christian responsibility towards it. As Christians we have a duty to advance the cause of peace, justice and charity so that our neighbours, all over the world, have physical and spiritual sustenance.

We have a heavy responsibility towards the 'young churches'. The world Church is no longer a Church which exists in certain countries and has 'missions' elsewhere. It is a community of local churches throughout the world.

There is much that we in the West can give but there is much more that we have to learn.

Practical assistance is an integral part of missionary work, so that the Gospel is seen as vital to ordinary human living. Christianity as an essential part of full human development.

Some suggested direct ways in which we can help, e.g., there should be a greater concern for the Third World and a great simplicity of living here at home; parishes should consider adopting a parish in the Third World; there needs to be more twinning between dioceses at home and those in the Third World. We should try not to pass on to the developing world the materialistic priorities of our own society.

Some reports mentioned the responsibility of individuals — that growth in the faith includes, of necessity, a missionary dimension, for everyone is missionary in the sense that he is 'sent out' into the world. Trained young people should be encouraged to give up one or two years of their lives to work in developing countries.

Other reports linked overseas missionary activity with the problem of race relations here at home. 'The missions have come home to us and we are not really fulfilling our responsibilities to the immigrant children from the East and from the Caribbean'.

Priests should seek to reduce colour prejudice (which is greater than race prejudice) through sermons and education work.

Scattered throughout the reports were the occasional warnings — e.g., 'We seem to have weakened our conviction with regard to missions and evangelisation'. 'Too great an emphasis on unity could cause us to become

inward looking and weaken our sense of mission'. 'It is important to influence our next-door neighbour as it is to preach the Gospel overseas'.

Funding and Sharing in Mission

There was not a great deal of comment on this topic in the reports.

There were one or two comments on the unjust distribution of wealth and the fact that very few people appeared to be trying to do anything about it.

The question was asked as to whether Catholics were becoming so pre-occupied with the possession of worldly goods that they were replacing Christian values with those of a seemingly non-Christian world.

But another report said, 'Christ delivered man from spiritual, rather than social, evils. He helped the poor by giving them new hope; they were to be first in the Kingdom of God'.

A number of suggestions for action appeared in the reports:

- ★ Missions, days of recollection and retreats should be organised so that the spiritual life of Catholics can be deepened to include the missionary dimension.
- ★ Parish committees should co-ordinate fund-raising for developing countries and encourage parishioners to pressurise Government to increase effective aid to such countries.
- ★ Recommended figure of 0.7% of the Gross National Product should be spent on assisting poor countries to help themselves to develop through education, training.

One report pointed out that people at home do not realise the financial difficulties of volunteer missionaries who are seen officially as development workers and so do not have any claim on the usual mission funds. Such people have to rely on the generosity of individuals.

Conclusions

Although there were comments on the theme of evangelisation in most diocesan reports and extensive sections in several, it seems that many Catholics do not have a very broad understanding of evangelisation.

It is frequently seen as solely the task of extending the membership of the Church rather than the communication of a living word 'which is liberation from everything that oppresses man' (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 9).

Evangelisation is therefore closely related to promoting the human development of all people, but this connection is seen in only a few reports.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION

The parish is still very much the hub around which the wheel of daily Catholic living expects to revolve. In almost every diocesan report people are looking to the parish to provide the lead and inspiration — in developing a fuller and deeper involvement in the liturgical life of the Church — in expanding their life of prayer — in providing the means of developing their knowledge and appreciation of the Faith — and in taking the overall responsibility for a comprehensive preparation of young people in their approach to Christian marriage.

Many individual criticisms of the parish set-up are to be heard: a number of people, often the young, find their parish community to be less than dynamic in its effect on their lives, but, even in the criticisms advanced, the implication often appears to be that the parish should be more effective rather than abolished.

It appears to be widely accepted that Catholics, individually and in groups, must bear more responsibility for their own growth in the Faith, but along with this goes the expectation that the priests of the parish provide not merely for the preservation of the 'status quo' but for developing, inspiring and leading the parishioners into a community of the people of God.

The Liturgy: Formative Influence

The possibilities for Christian development and formation of the new liturgy have obviously caught the imagination of very many young people. They look to it to be imaginative and inspirational.

It is seen as 'a significant factor in formation and education in the life of the Faith'. Again growth in the Faith is seen as being 'linked strongly with good, well-constructed modern liturgy'.

A number of people express their sense of loss at the apparent abandonment of many of 'the old ways' — the Latin Mass, silence at Mass, the popular devotions — but by far the greater majority see the possibility of a much richer spiritual life in the involvement the new liturgy calls for from them.

The possibilities of devotional service based on the Prayer of the Church are mentioned by not a few.

But the involvement of more lay people in the liturgy, and greater involvement, especially of whole families is repeatedly requested. Many specific ideas are put forward by a number of dioceses:

- ★ more preparation for liturgical celebration of Mass and Sacraments;
- ★ wider and more frequent use of penitential services — especially of general absolution;
- ★ deeper understanding of 'celebrating' Mass together;
- ★ that baptism during Mass be the normative practice;
- ★ use modern means of communication even in the liturgy, e.g., audio-visual;
- ★ relating the Mass and sacraments to everyday life;
- ★ each parish should have a liturgy committee.

Prayer Groups

Also requests are repeatedly made for instruction and guidance in prayer — both private and communal.

Prayer groups are obviously catching the imagination of a growing number of people, as well as fulfilling a need, as also are study groups which are suggested a number of times as filling a need to know the teaching and meaning of Scripture along with relating the Faith to everyday life.

House Masses

The value that people place on 'house Masses' comes through very strongly in all diocesan reports. It is valued for the family's sake, for small groups, and for local areas in the community.

Parish Visiting

The value of 'parish visiting' by the priests is repeatedly referred to — so that they know and are known by parishioners individually as friends who 'care', so as to build up a sense of community in the parish and to develop the community into a caring one.

Outstandingly however, people look to the parish — seemingly as an irreplaceable source — for preparing young people for marriage, for taking special care of newly-married couples, and for a positive commitment to fostering, supporting and strengthening family life.

Parents, teachers, priests and the whole parish community are seen as playing complementary parts in this work, but, in the opinion of many people, the parish is the focal point.

Again and again priests are asked to preach on the spiritual aspect of marriage, the ideals of marriage, the importance, value and character of the sacrament of marriage.

They are asked to involve themselves closely with the schools in arranging, organising and taking part in a well-constructed syllabus of marriage preparation, ordered to the gradual physical and intellectual development of children.

To do this effectively, in-service training for parents, teachers and priests as marriage counsellors is advocated.

A great deal of stress is given to the importance of immediate pre-marriage preparation. In this the role of the parish is particularly seen as of major importance:

- ★ in providing structured and up to date preparation and instruction;
- ★ in recruiting help and guidance;
- ★ in preparing retreat and study days;
- ★ in exemplifying a continuing, caring background;
- ★ in informing consciences;
- ★ in encouraging 'young marrieds' and mature couples to be involved;
- ★ in assessing people's readiness for marriage.

More local Catholic Marriage Advisory Councils are repeatedly asked for and greater use of the facilities they offer. Finally, the thought seems to be growing that a minimum period (covering a number of months) of Church preparation for marriages should be required of all engaged couples.

Even after the marriage has taken place many Catholics obviously look to the parish for devoted care and guidance to the newly-weds and on throughout married life.

Individual examples of such care and guidance are spelled out in calls for ministry to single people; engaged and newly-married couples; parents; growing families; families in stress or disharmony.

Sermon

There is strong evidence that people look to the Sunday sermon as one of the main props in the understanding and developing of their faith, in

relating their religion to their life in the world and being led to closer union with God.

They ask that priests recognise the continuing value of the sermon — that it be clear, well-thought out, decisive and more often doctrinal.

As one diocese put it, there is need for sermons by priests 'who are prophets and risk the treatment that they received'.

- ★ Clear, bold preaching on 'touchy subjects';
- ★ Make preaching 'talking with people rather than at them';
- ★ Make preaching a stimulus to inspire confidence.

Family Days

Parish 'family days' are asked for, more frequent parish missions, the provision of religious books (with guidance of these), the linking of Mass with the world of work (the upgrading of the feast of St Joseph the Worker is repeatedly requested), and that specific attention be given to cater for the spiritual needs of children and young people.

There are specific calls for:

- ★ family support groups;
- ★ liturgy and prayer groups;
- ★ community involvement groups.

The School

As might be expected, the quality of religious education in schools is a major concern of a great number of Catholics. But there appears to be a growing acceptance of the idea that religious instruction and development of children and young people has, in the past, been left too much at the door of the school.

People are insisting more vocally that religious development depends on a joint mission of parents, school and parish. Greater family involvement in a child's school religious education is repeatedly requested by parents.

Equally strong is the demand that priests involve themselves in school life, make more provision for out-of-school religious instruction and formation and work closely with the school in developing a wide and active liturgical life in the school, adapted to the various ages of the children.

A general commitment to retaining Catholic schools seems to be widely and deeply held. But a number of misgivings are not infrequently voiced. Governors and managers of schools are requested to consider carefully the matter; the proportion of Catholic to non-Catholic teachers on the staff is mentioned as being the subject of concern.

The need for 'committed, active, informed Catholic teachers' is stressed; 'religion' should not be the 'cinderella subject' but be given a prominent place in the curriculum with a detailed and progressive syllabus being followed.

Content and Method

In a number of diocesan reports, concern is expressed about both the content and the methods of teaching religion. Teachers and priests are asked to be positive in their presentation of Christ, his life and his teaching — to give firm direction and instruction in the faith and gradually unfold to the children the joy and fulfilment of living out the religion they possess.

Persistence is called for from both teachers and priests in evoking in children a sense of purpose, responsibility and sensitivity.

Religious formation should develop the virtues required in human relationships and a deeper understanding of the real value of the sacraments in living a full Christian life. (Along with this, however, one diocese doubts the value of the quality of the teaching of Catholic doctrine in schools and urges that money be spent on assisting Christian formation in the family context).

Pre-marriage preparation in schools is many times requested, even from a comparatively early age, and a continuing care for young people in clubs and organisations is advocated.

Sunday schools command a certain amount of support, again contributing to the widely held view of the parish commitment to continued formation.

Lastly, the call for a much later conferring of the sacrament of confirmation is almost universal.

Catholic involvement in tertiary and higher education has, as yet, elicited little comment from the dioceses. Much more is expected in the months leading up to Congress as the dioceses and groups consider the agenda in greater depth.

It is pointed out that a number of colleges of education provide for adult education at academic level through in-service instruction in Scripture studies, sacramental theology and Church teaching.

Until recently this service has been open predominantly for teachers but increasingly it is being made available to others.

The work of the Upholland Northern Institute is apparently becoming more widely known and used and it provides similar courses to the above in dioceses and deaneries and makes them available during weekday evenings and weekends.

Adult Formation

But if little has so far been said on catechesis in the formal area of tertiary education, great interest is evident in the wider field of general adult Christian formation.

There appears to be a growing recognition that the understanding of Christianity gained in childhood and at school simply does not suffice for an intelligent and responsible living-out of one's religion in adult life.

Many people seem to recognise that the insights of the Second Vatican Council have suggested changed attitudes and approaches to religion but apparently feel that they are not, as yet, in tune with these developments.

Liturgical changes are generally recognised to be more than merely ceremonial or ritual alterations and there is an evident desire to understand them more fully. The weekly sermon is seen as being of great importance but, even so, it is felt to be insufficient.

Appreciation of the sacraments as affecting everyday life is increasing, but concern is expressed that they are still not widely enough understood or valued to their full potential.

The general call for continued adult education and formation would appear to be almost universal.

In its more general sense it is looked for in systematic doctrinal and moral teaching from the pulpit; that sermons be better prepared; that they give clear and direct guidance; that they relate the Church's teaching more closely to everyday living; that they explain more fully the underlying meaning and implications of liturgical changes, and that they explore the effects of sacramental life in the everyday lives of Christians.

There appears to be widespread appreciation that the Church has much to offer in guidance and encouragement on the living-out of Christian marriage and many people express themselves to be ready and eager to know this and to be helped to appreciate and experience it.

Specifically, a number of dioceses call for actual courses to be set up in parishes and deaneries, devoted to the whole range of adult Christian formation:

- ★ on the Church's social teaching;
- ★ on apologetics;
- ★ on the Christian view of marriage, work, life and death;
- ★ on the study of Scripture;
- ★ on the whole field of moral theology.

People are apparently looking, not so much for lectures or formal education courses, but rather for small, parish-based, guidance and discussion groups.

It is felt that the parish clergy, with the help of suitably qualified and competent laity, are most suited to these needs. Specific groups for young people between school-age and early adulthood are particularly mentioned, but there is also a general desire that such groups be encouraged by all.

The possibilities of deeper Christian formation to be gained from house Masses and prayer groups is evident from the replies received from a number of dioceses and it would not seem to be too strong to describe the desire for growth in these areas as being a really felt 'need'.

In all these aspects of Christian education and formation — parish, school and adult formation — many other suggestions have been put forward and hopes expressed.

It is evident that many Catholics are anxious to know the Faith more deeply through instruction and discussion, to experience it more immediately through greater involvement in prayer, liturgical life and sacramental grace, and to be more actively engaged in Church life at parish, deanery and even wider levels.

In recent years it has been said not infrequently, that people are 'hungry for God'. The pre-Congress discussion and debate in this area of Christian formation would seem to bear out the reality and widespread nature of that hunger.

SECTOR F

WITNESS

Reports indicate that discussion on this section concentrated on the world of industry rather than on work in general including the professional sector. This may have been due to the fact that the discussion paper, *The World of Work*, focussed on this aspect. It would also appear

in many cases that those who discussed the topic were not involved in the industrial field. However, some groups, notably YCW, did attempt to come to terms with issues involved and present suggestions.

General Impression

The overall impression in the reports from the dioceses is that there is little or no appreciation among the people of any real relation between their faith and the work they do.

All consider that there ought to be, and that the Church needs to help people to realise how Christian beliefs are related to work. It was thought that committed lay people and priests with special training are needed to emphasise the connection between the Church and industry.

Catholics by and large do not see their work situation in terms of mission. It is very difficult for working people not to consider work in terms of money to fulfil their family and personal responsibilities.

'Work is the use to which we put the abilities given to us by God. It is also the means by which an individual and the family is enabled to live'.

Social Teaching

There is a call for a reappraisal of Catholic social teaching and inclusion in adult education programmes. This would guide and fit Catholics to meet the challenge set by modern society.

The Church should reaffirm its social doctrine as an integral part of the Christian concept of life. In order to do this there should be greater efforts to spread the simplified versions of the social teaching of the Church.

Human Dignity

Reports show many are aware of papal teaching. Work ought to increase man's dignity (*Populorum progressio*). Work, therefore ought to be creative. Much in contemporary society militates against this. Assembly-line work kills skill and creativity, and also leads to high staff turnover.

It attracts because of high pay incentive. Many remark upon the impersonality of large concerns. Work is rarely organised with the good of the worker in mind, but how to derive the most profit.

People seem to have no real choice of job — experience and qualifications limit choice to what is available. Job satisfaction, feeling part of a team, brought contentment at work. Smaller groups were thought to generate a greater sense of pride and satisfaction in the work done.

Bad working conditions and lack of respect for persons were experienced by some and this was seen as a lack of sensitivity for the dignity of the person.

Morality at Work

Dishonesty at work is thought to be a great moral problem. Catholics do not always help the situation.

It would seem that many hold the view that stealing from an individual would be wrong but see nothing wrong in stealing from the firm — both in actually taking, and in wasting time, misusing sick leave or firm's materials.

On the management side, honesty is affected by the treatment of workers. Different standards are adopted towards those on the shop floor and staff. A balance needs to be exercised between profit and exploitation.

Trade Unions, Professional Organisations

Reports indicate that little previous thought had been given to the international effects of work. Some solidarity was felt with exploited workers abroad, but perhaps more knowledge of this was necessary. Many people are striving to understand how the economic factors governing the world markets apply to them.

The Christian has a responsibility to all men, not solely with his sector of society — an obligation to his workmates, management, and country. It is felt that better cooperation exists on the continent between workers and management, where sharing of ideas appears to lead to better productivity and standards for everyone.

Resentment of immigrant workers was felt when they are willing to work for lower wages. In undercutting British jobs they retard progress towards better conditions and fairer spread of jobs.

A strong desire is expressed that equal pay for equal work is to be striven for irrespective of age or sex.

Areas of Concern

Catholics are not thought to be particularly active in their Trade Unions, though it is acknowledged that they ought to be. In some cases it is thought that unions appear to stand contrary to what Christians believe and so are eyed with suspicion.

Because they feel powerless to effect any change, some suggested that this is why they do not become involved.

- (a) Closed shop policy — no card, no job — promotes sectional interest.
- (b) A majority vote binds members to action in what they may consider an unjust or harmful strike.
- (c) Kangaroo courts easily lead to violence.
- (d) Need for secret ballot on important issues which could lead to industrial action. Catholics should work for reconciliation, not confrontation, and should seek the common interest.

Unemployment

In general it was considered that unemployment is offensive to human dignity, the effect on school leavers is demoralising and degrading. It was considered to be a greater problem in the North than in the South. In the latter it is a question of suitability of work rather than availability.

It is accepted that the trend towards unemployment is likely to increase, and that the unskilled are more likely to suffer.

Job Creation

Participation by the Church in local Job Creation Schemes is favoured. These schemes help to develop social skills, and also help to counteract the effects of frustration.

However, all were not agreed on this as some thought they were of little use due to low pay and the temporary nature of the work.

Working Mothers

Great concern is expressed that some mothers are compelled to work because of financial difficulties. It is felt that this brought many social problems in its wake.

Some people suggest that the family suffers if the mother is expected to do the equivalent of two jobs. It is suggested that men do not always accept marriage as a partnership of equals, hence the burden on the mother.

Flexi-hours could assist in alleviating some problems.

Others say that mothers are sometimes bored and need work to occupy them, and that with the increase of educational facilities many women wish to seek fulfilment by continuing a career after marriage.

RURAL AND URBAN LIFE

Catholics living in rural areas experience their own kind of difficulties.

- ★ They are cut off from the wider concerns of the Church and are often isolated from each other. One largely rural diocese reported: 'As Catholics many of us take part in secular community life but experience difficulty in building a sense of parish community because we are so scattered'.

They stress the role of the priest in keeping contact between people who are largely cut off from each other.

- ★ Low wages and lack of job opportunity result in the drift of the young to the cities.
- ★ Places of outstanding beauty have their own 'immigration' problem. As retirement areas for the elderly, seasonal influx of visitors, etc. Higher age of people in rural areas places extra pressure on caring services and available voluntary help.

There is evidence of a new vitality.

- ★ A new apostolate of the countryside. Centres for Catholic life are being developed by small groups of religious.
- ★ Travelling missions are taking the Church to where people are.
- ★ Prayer and neighbourhood groups help to keep a sense of Catholic life and purpose among the people.

But in Urban Areas:

- ★ Rapid post-war development destroyed many existing communities. The task of the Church is to help to rebuild them: 'Only when some form of natural community is developed and built up can we Christianise it'.
- ★ Tensions caused by bad housing — the acute housing shortage and high rise living — can lead to vandalism and family breakdown.
- ★ The Church is playing a significant part in helping immigrants to integrate into their local community without losing their cultural identity.
- ★ Inner city areas have their own particular problems. One diocese reported: 'Parish in an inner-city context is an out of date arrangement. New initiatives are called for, particularly working with smaller groups of people with responsibility and concern for their area'.

WORK AND LEISURE

Attitudes to work vary among age groups. Older people are generally thought to be happier at work and to take it more seriously. Boredom at work is noted particularly in the 17-25 age groups. In this group there is little opportunity for creative work. This can lead to frustration and in turn can lead to vandalism.

To enable a creative use of leisure, more educational help is needed. This is becoming more important since people tend to have more time on their hands. There is a distinction between enforced leisure and that freely chosen.

PUBLIC AND CIVIC LIFE

Reports show: people recognise that more Catholics should be involved in public and civic life.

- ★ The Church should avoid party politics; increased leadership needed on key issues.
- ★ People appreciated the guidance given by the bishops at the time of European and national elections.
- ★ A fear of being manipulated by politicians; powerlessness of individuals in face of public bodies.
- ★ Greater involvement called for in local welfare and community work, national and local government.

COMMUNICATIONS

Very little was submitted on this topic by parishes or dioceses but a couple of Catholic organisations and commissions contributed ideas.

It is felt by those involved in communications work in the Church that a great many opportunities for evangelisation are offered by the modern media. They point out that the Church itself has acknowledged a responsibility to use the means of social communication available to spread the Good News to as many people as possible.

Some disquiet is expressed about the growing number of people concerned about dangers in the media such as low moral standards in some programmes and exploitation of sexuality and violence.

The constant pressures of worldliness, materialistic attitudes and trivialisation are also mentioned. It is the duty of the Church to help the

people of God not to be harmed by these pressures, suggests the Catholic Press and TV centre, and further study and research on these matters is recommended.

'The Church should have a positive attitude to the media and should study the role of the media in the community'.

The same report pointed out that the media have the potential to serve the 'good of mankind and the development of the human spirit by programmes of a wide range of excellence'.

SECTOR G

JUSTICE

The discussion outline 'A Question of Justice' was issued to parishes for the autumn of 1979; consequently only a limited number of dioceses have been in a position to report extensively on opinion in their areas. In addition two episcopal commissions, some specialised Catholic organisations and a considerable number of smaller regional and local groups also reported.

All the major justice issues were covered and a substantial measure of agreement is evident.

The Focus

A number of reports look to the parish and the local Church to provide the focus of fellowship and community to enable people to work to alleviate deprivation in their neighbourhood in a coherent and co-ordinated way, and to gather at local level to promote justice in the wider world.

Work for Justice — essential part of Mission: One report states: 'Many Catholics still feel that to get involved in human rights or disarmament campaigns is meddling in politics and nothing to do with religion'. The report sums up a number of requests that: 'A Statement from the National Pastoral Congress that work for justice is a constitutive element in preaching the Gospel would be a timely endorsement of the 1971 Synod Document: Justice in the World'.

Racial Justice: This is the issue which has provoked the greatest response in the whole sector.

Discrimination confirmed: Dioceses with significant racial minorities (East London, Birmingham, Salford, Nottingham) reported the existence of prejudice and discrimination especially in relation to jobs, housing, the police, and within the Church. Other dioceses reported that race was not an issue in their area, as there was no black population, but Plymouth suggested 'were there to be a large influx of coloured people into our rural backwater, attitudes of suspicion and prejudice would emerge . . .'. Another report underlines: 'Prejudices should be watched for in ourselves and guarded against'.

Causes of discrimination: Ignorance or fear of the unfamiliar; fear for economic security, jobs and housing, were given as root causes. Other causes suggested are the reverse discrimination of the Race Relations Act; the desire of minorities to keep their own traditions and cultures.

But as Westminster says: 'these aspiration cause problems, but the mistake is for us, the host nation, to regard this as a problem of the immigrant's making.

'Whereas the real problem is that of us being unwilling to cope with the differences in culture and identity, and failing to meet the challenge of a multiracial environment'.

Northern Ireland: The intractability of this problem perplexes and distresses Catholics in this country.

The apparent failure of Pope John Paul II's direct appeal for peace during his Irish visit is noted 'bleakly' in more than one report.

Several reports urge the Church to continue its commitment to seek a creative contribution to peace. At least one diocese has formed a sub-committee of its Justice and Peace Commission to consider Northern Ireland.

Catholics are urged to intensify prayer for a solution. Clergy in Britain are urged to redouble their efforts to be seen to work with clergy of other denominations. This, it is felt, must have positive repercussions in our own community as well as in Ireland.

One diocesan report suggested the MP's be encouraged to work even harder to remove restrictions on human rights in Northern Ireland.

One organisation made a comprehensive proposal that all its Churches here work with the Churches in Ireland in a fresh initiative to implement the recommendations of the 1976 Inter-Church Report 'Violence in Ireland'; to stimulate concern and action in this country in support of remedial welfare and reconciliation projects.

Peace, defence, disarmament: On this general topic one report puts it: 'The attainment of peace is the priority for our day . . . otherwise all our other considerations at the National Pastoral Congress as elsewhere will be brought to nothing by the terrible destruction of a Third World War'.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Reports received reflect the basic Christian principle that all people of whatever background must be recognised and welcomed as individuals, and encouraged to participate fully in society and in the Church. It is our duty to work and to pray to make the multi-racial and multi-cultural society in which we live a just and peaceful one.

Racism is unreservedly condemned, and membership of racist groups such as the National Front is seen as incompatible with Christian principles.

The Hierarchy is asked to make repeated clear and authoritative statements on racism and calls are heard for even wider dissemination of the Church's teaching and Church documents on race issues.

Our Church schools have an important role to play in the education of our children for life in a multi-cultural society.

The importance of parish sermons covering race questions and teaching on discrimination/prejudice is emphasised . . .

A number of further points emerge in individual reports: the use of coloured clergy in parishes, from time to time, is suggested. Clergy would be invited from the Caribbean to work with the immigrant community, or in parishes.

Warm, welcoming personal relationships are everyone's responsibility. Individuals ought always to speak out against discrimination when they meet it.

Our clergy need help to understand better the culture and attitudes of black Catholics and other immigrant Catholics.

All ethnic groups who make up the parish should be properly represented and have a full say in parish decisions.

Efforts should be made to learn about and appreciate the non-Christian faiths of the immigrant communities.

Parishes could join, or affiliate to their local Community Relations Council.

Dioceses should try to be aware of the special needs of migrant workers and overseas students and of ethnic minorities.

One deanery suggested that an end to all immigration was necessary: another that laws to enforce racial equality did not help at all.

Disarmament: Possible or Not?

The Armed Forces report states that disarmament is an impossible ideal, and that defence expenditure is not excessive. Other reports question this, describing defence expenditure as 'staggering' and 'too high'.

One report asks how can we judge what is proper defence expenditure in relation to other needs of society.

The Armed Forces report stresses that in peace time military expenditure makes possible services aid in disasters, air sea rescue, flood relief, etc., and emphasises that military leaders are accountable to civilian government.

Others argue that arms expenditure increases mistrust and the likelihood of war, and drains the world of resources for basic needs such as homes and education; that our high national level of defence expenditure is a significant factor in inflation.

A longing for peace: One diocesan report suggests that 'The issues of peace have been sadly ignored in the pulpit', which may explain Plymouth's subsequent comment that discussion often divided simply on existing party political lines.

An organisation specifically working on peace issues says 'Since Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in terris* in 1963, peace and disarmament have been persistent themes of papal statements and Vatican teaching.

Yet local churches have done almost nothing to change the policies of their own countries on these issues'.

A general horror and fear of nuclear weapons is apparent. These are already illegal in international law, one diocese claims, since they indiscriminately kill civilians, and their use is also outlawed by the teaching of the Church: *Gaudium et spes*.

Nuclear weapons do not make us more secure, some claim: they make us a prime target for attack; accidental war, detonation by mistake, is always a possibility. But a further report regards the possession of nuclear deterrent as a necessity to ensure peace at present; and another draws attention to our Nato obligations.

Arms sales: A more common mind emerges over arms sales. Several reports deplored the sale of weaponry to desperately poor countries.

One diocese forcefully exclaims: 'different deaneries see this kind of traffic for profit as "wicked", "not right", "repugnant", "unchristian", "hindering true development"!

'Where there are qualifications people say that any sales should be "discriminatory", i.e., purpose of defence known, with thorough investigation into each case and measures employed to ensure that repressive regimes are not supported'.

Profit taking from private arms deals is found particularly repugnant: one suggestion is that they should be prohibited, and that no government should deal in arms simply for profit.

Violence as a solution: In the discussions about this, reports received differed as to whether violence should be ruled out altogether, or justified as a last resort, and evidently drew upon the Second World War, Northern Ireland, Southern Africa in their reasoning.

What can the Church do? A variety of suggested lines of action appear:

The Church in England and Wales is asked to continue to oppose the nuclear defence policy and to endorse the British Council of Churches' call to the government not to renew or replace Polaris nuclear weapons when they become obsolete.

Grassroots education about peace should be an important priority. Guidance and education about peace issues is asked for. Peace Sunday is seen as an ideal parish focus for this.

All Catholic secondary schools should include some form of peace studies in the curriculum. Training in justice and peace matters should be an essential part of seminary training.

Adult education in this field needs to be spearheaded by diocesan justice and peace commissions preferably with full-time workers. The value of such work has already been shown in one or two dioceses which have organised groups at parish, deanery and diocesan levels, and have made available material for adult education, sermons, and pastoral letters.

Prisoners: Little matter came from the diocesan reports concerning prisoners except to identify them as one of the marginal groups who should be given priority in the evangelising work of the Church.

The Church was urged to concern itself much more with prison conditions and with the prison population: prisoners' Sunday was seen as a time for focussing attention on the question.

Injustice to the Third World and human rights worldwide: Salford sums up a widely held view when it says:

'The injustices in our world result from unjust structures for which we are all collectively responsible. It is these which cause the sinful situations of oppression and exploitation around the world' or put more simply another diocese says:

'The Third World is our world'.

Aid: Reports stress that Britain's aid should be a genuine effort to set things right: at present through being tied to purchase in Britain it is often more to the donor's benefit than to the recipient's.

The amount of aid is deemed inadequate; there is a call that 'we should press for our country to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNP'.

Many reports stress the need for parishes to involve themselves more deeply in providing aid for Third World countries — even to the extent of allocating a percentage of parish income.

CAFOD'S work is repeatedly commended.

Justice, not just almsgiving: Several reports warn that we must be clear about the distinction between alms-giving and work for justice. Two groups draw attention to the national lack of will to rectify injustices of international trade.

The injustices of the world finance systems, and the enforced dependency of poor countries on one or two commodities, are deplored. The responsibility for the exploitation of workers by the subsidiary companies of British concerns in the Third World countries is alluded to.

Mention is made of the pursuit of economic development by multinational companies along lines unsuited to the needs of the developing countries. Concern was expressed over the plight of political prisoners in different parts of the world.

Suggestions

The Church should continue to encourage volunteers and professionals to lend their services in valid programmes of human development. Continuing education at parish level is recommended, through local justice and peace groups, for this subject should not be seen as an optional extra, but central to the life of the Church.

Positive leadership from parish clergy could channel what is seen as *a vast fund of untapped goodwill into positive action for the Third World.*

The Church should make itself aware of the actions of British companies in the Third World, encourage investments in socially useful schemes and re-examine Church investment policy.

Parishes are urged to support Amnesty International in its work for political prisoners and in campaigns against torture.

Lifestyle: Several reports see in this a great challenge to our own life-style. We must be content with less, in order to pay a fair price for goods from the Third World.

There is suggested:

- ★ A much greater corporate involvement in Fast Days properly kept.
- ★ The lifestyle of our Churches — buildings, furnishings, etc. — should express poverty in a world in need.
- ★ From the bishops a theology which develops the concept of 'structural' or 'social sin' for the man in the pew. One diocese even goes so far as to suggest: 'With the full authority of scripture behind her, the Church should fearlessly speak out, in this world in which wealth is so unevenly distributed . . . against injustice in countries where it occurs, even at some risk to her own members'.

Human rights and social justice at home: The identifying of injustice at home obviously caused some difficulties initially but eventually a long list of issues emerged.

The fact that unemployment takes away human dignity was referred to in several reports and it was suggested that a person's right to work and to earn sufficient for basic needs has been forgotten. Three areas suggested that young people should be guaranteed a job of some kind on finishing their education.

Wider needs: When it came to the wider social needs the homeless, the old, and one parent families were referred to by different groups. There seems to be a wide feeling that we are all responsible in some sense and that the Church should be involved locally.

One diocese suggests that the most marginalised in society should be a priority — present day outcasts, like the mentally handicapped and gypsies.

A particular injustice which Shrewsbury felt ought to be rectified is the pernicious requirement that young couples sign a guarantee that they will not have children in order to obtain mortgages.

Powerlessness: Another report suggested that through the present policies of cuts in services and cuts in income tax, injustice was being inflicted on the most needy. There was a fervent plea to us all to try to understand the powerlessness felt by people in the face of political and economic forces outside their control.

Sex discrimination: More work was called for on sex discrimination which, it is agreed, is often ignored in comparison with discrimination on racial or religious grounds.

Abortion: Perhaps the Church's stand on abortion is taken largely for granted by Catholics, but it was surprising how few reports dwelt on the question.

General suggestions: Given that dealing with injustices is difficult, one diocese suggests that parishes be sub-divided into groups of families so that people can really get to know each other and feel responsible for those around them. The idea that the parish is a natural point to co-ordinate work in the locality for social justice frequently comes through.

IN CONCLUSION

The Diocesan Reports in this area of the Congress work bear witness to a yearning for the Church, locally and nationally, to grasp some of these issues, to give leadership and to promote action for change. The Church is called to be constantly concerned with promoting justice and peace at home and abroad. Human rights and social justice should be central concerns of our work in building the Kingdom.

TAPE-RECORDED MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

PRAISED be Jesus Christ!

It is with joy that I send you this message of greeting, as you gather in the Cathedral of Christ the King for the opening of your National Pastoral Congress.

Your two thousand delegates — drawn from every part of England and Wales, and including priests, deacons, men and women religious, and laity — have gathered at the invitation of your Bishops and under their guidance. As members of the Pilgrim Church you come together to share information and to take stock of what has so far been done, in fidelity to the Gospel, to implement the decrees of the Second Vatican Council.

In this you are following my declared intention when I was made Pope: to be faithful to the Council and to strive to bring it to fruition. May God bless and guide you in this important resolve.

I have been informed of how you have made careful preparations in your dioceses and religious congregations and organisations for this special occasion.

Your desire is to achieve a deep spiritual renewal of your lives. You wish to strengthen your common commitment to the mission which our Lord Jesus Christ entrusted to his Church, a mission in which all the People of God share through Baptism and Confirmation.

I pray that your work together in these days will bear great fruit. And I invite you to place all your trust in God 'whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine' (Eph. 3:20).

I send my greetings also to the observers from the other Christian communities who have come to share with their Catholic brothers and sisters in this significant religious celebration. As the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council reminded us: 'Let all Christ's faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the Gospel, the more they are fostering and even practising Christian unity' (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 7).

I greet too the civic authorities and official representatives who are present, and I offer the expression of my respect and friendship to the whole city of Liverpool in the celebration of its centenary.

As these words reach you I shall be visiting the people of Africa. Mindful of the universality of the Church and of the unity in Christ in which we all share, I ask for your prayers that my pilgrimage of faith will help to build up the entire kingdom of God, and give special encouragement to the Church in Africa. During these next days, the Congress candle will burn in the sanctuary of your Cathedral as a reminder of our risen life in Christ and of his invitation to us to share in that life. May it also be a sign of your faith burning brightly as a sign of hope to the world. And may it symbolise your trust in Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

May the grace and peace of our Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all.

MAY 2, 1980

HOMILY OF MOST REVEREND DEREK WORLOCK,
ARCHBISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

Preached during the opening Liturgy, Metropolitan Cathedral, May 2, 1980.

THE Scriptures use many different images in an attempt to make known the true nature of the Church. Tonight, as we experience the Gospel's 'city set on a hill-top', our minds not surprisingly focus on the Church as the building of God: the Lord himself the once-rejected cornerstone, the apostles of old the foundations, of this, God's near-new concrete 'tent pitched amongst men'.

Yet it is so much more than a building, ancient or modern. For the Church, the house of God in which his family dwells, is a community of people: 'living stones', as St Peter says, 'making a spiritual house' lit by that wonderful light into which God has called us out of darkness.

It is as members of God's family that we have gathered here tonight, conscious perhaps of differences in background and age-groups, of differences in tradition, even outlook, yet one in our heritage of Christian faith: our common purpose here to worship but also to be so filled with Christ's Spirit as to share in his redemptive mission to those outside the household of the faith.

Yet we are conscious also of the need to face the new challenges and opportunities emerging in these last decades of the century. We clearly recognise the need for us to make our own responsible contribution to that same heritage and tradition which we must hold for a while and then pass on — hopefully, still more glorious and Christ-like — to those who will follow.

For that heritage of faith is no mere page from history but a living thing which our life in Christ and in this world must somehow help to enrich still further.

'Yet not I but Christ in me'. If we are not to be swept along by the tide of the events of today, not to allow our family life to disintegrate under today's pressures, not to close our eyes to the injustices of today's scene at home and abroad, not to be mastered by the steadily advancing technology of today and tomorrow, we must remember positively that we are

part of that today and tomorrow: that the Church, as Pope Paul VI used to say, is not *of* the world, but is *in* and *for* the world.

It is because of our spiritual relationship with Christ that we strive to bring his Way, his Truth and his Life to those with whom we share today's world. It is because of our heavenly destiny that we must try to help give direction to the world of tomorrow.

Not that it is always as clear as that. It is not always easy, amidst the noise of our busy lives, to hear the answer to the fundamental questions posed in the agenda of our Congress: 'What is Jesus Christ saying to us in the situation in which we find ourselves today? What is the way ahead?'

Just as it would be false to hope that by Tuesday morning we shall have all the answers to the world's ills, so we must avoid the alternative of moralising with uninvolved generalisations.

We are a people who are the Church, not a building: a people holding different ministries and tasks but with shared dignity and responsibility. We are dealing with a heavenly kingdom and a personal God, just as we are striving to bring the light of the Good News of the Gospel to men, women and children and not to an anonymous monochrome expressionless mankind.

With our faith we know that the answers we seek lie in Jesus Christ: and that he left his mission to the apostles and to the Holy Spirit to whom we turn in confidence for guidance.

'Jesus Christ becomes present with the power of his truth and his love' wrote Pope John Paul in his letter *Redemptor hominis*. 'He is the way for the Church and for each human being'.

If that sounds too vague, let me read on: 'Each human being, in all the unrepeatable reality of what we are and what we do, with our own personal history, with all our links with others, each one of us is the road the Church must take in fulfilling her mission. Each one of us is the primary, fundamental road marked out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption'.

To fulfil our role we, the Church, must be conscious always of our vocation to share in the Kingly role of Christ, maintaining mastery over material considerations; and we must also be aware of the real situation and needs of men and women the world over.

Christ wants us to have life and to have it more abundantly. 'The Church, uniting herself with all the riches of the mystery of the Redemption, becomes a Church of living people, living because they receive interior life by the work of the Spirit of truth' (*Redemptor hominis*).

That is why we have started this Congress with a Service of Reconciliation and Renewal. For at the heart of all renewal is to be reconciled to God and with one another.

We are to renew the promises of our baptism, for it is in Christ that we find the fulness of our unity.

Together we seek Christ's way forward; no longer individuals with personal preferences and hobby-horses, but as one people, the Church a people renewed: the light of whose faith — so much more than a mere two thousand candle-power — shall from the lantern of this Cathedral church, through myriad colours crowned with the thorns of Christ our King, shine forth to the world outside, which watches a little, seeks a little and needs so much.

These next days are a tremendous opportunity. They are also a challenge not without difficulties. To that challenge let us reply with the same words as were used by our present Holy Father when he was elected to the papacy: 'With obedience in faith to Christ, my Lord, and with trust in the Mother of Christ and of the Church, in spite of the great difficulties, I accept'.

In nomine Domini. Amen.

VIDEO-MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I AM very happy to have this opportunity to speak to you, the delegates to the National Pastoral Congress, as you begin your consideration of important issues affecting the life of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

You have come together in the name of Jesus Christ. You gather in a spirit of hope and expectation, trusting in the promise of our Saviour: 'Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them' (Mt 18:20). You desire, during these days, to evaluate the life and work of the Church, to deepen your prayer, to open your hearts ever wider to the call for constant conversion, to suggest the way forward for the future.

This is a great responsibility and opportunity for all of you. May you carry out your task with courage and humility, seeking the light and strength of the Holy Spirit in order to be faithful to the Gospel. The Catholic people of your countries have a long tradition of faithfulness to Christ and to the See of Peter, as is witnessed in the lives of your martyrs. Let this tradition of faithfulness which you have inherited continue to be the hallmark of your lives.

At the beginning of the Congress I extend my congratulations for the initiative you are taking in shared responsibility. It is an initiative which bears witness to the variety of gifts in the Body of Christ, and to the vital mission of all baptised persons in the Church who, in union with the hierarchy and under their direction, are building up the Kingdom of God.

Shared responsibility in the Church is based upon the conviction that it is one and the same Spirit of truth who directs the hearts of the faithful and who guarantees the Magisterium of the pastors of the flock.

In this regard I would like to recall what I said to a group of bishops in Rome on the occasion of their *ad limina* visit: 'In the community of the faithful — which must always maintain Catholic unity with the Bishops and the Apostolic See — there are great insights of faith. The Holy Spirit is active in enlightening the minds of the faithful with his truth, and in inflaming their hearts with his love. But these insights of faith and this *sensus fidelium* are not independent of the Magisterium of the Church which is an instrument of the same Holy Spirit and is assisted by him. It is

only when the faithful have been nourished by the Word of God, faithfully transmitted in its purity and integrity, that their own charisms are fully operative and fruitful. Once the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed to the community and is accepted, it brings forth fruits of justice and holiness of life in abundance'. (AAS 71 (1979), p. 998).

From the time of my election to the Chair of Peter, I have considered it my duty to continue the work of the Second Vatican Council. In order to fulfil this task I have felt the need to call attention to the Church's understanding of her own nature and mission, as set out in the Magna Carta of the Council, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. Again and again we need to ponder the mystery of the Church, striving to appreciate ever more keenly this visible community of faith, hope and charity through which Christ communicates truth and grace to all men and women (cf. *Lumen gentium*, 8).

On this occasion I ask each of you to meditate on the mystery of the Church and to ponder the marvellous ways in which God's saving power is effected through her. Consider your own role in the mission of the Church, whether it be as a priest, deacon, religious or lay-person. For each baptised person is called to participate actively in the Church's mission so that in our day she may make her presence felt in action. Above all let us realise that the Church is a community of prayer. It is especially in prayer that Jesus unites us to himself in his work of salvation and service.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: 'Let us not lose sight of Jesus who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection' (Heb 12:2). Let us not lose sight of his guiding Word. Let us not lose sight of his spirit abiding in our hearts. In everything, trust in Jesus. Trust in his grace working within you and inviting you to sacrifice and holiness. Trust in his presence in the Eucharist and in the whole Church. Trust in the power of his Gospel to be the light which will lead you into the future. 'Let the message of Christ in all its richness find a home in you' (Col 3:16); for it is his justice, his compassion, his love which you must bring to the world.

Again I ask Almighty God to bless and guide you, and to keep you close for ever to Christ, who is the Way and the Truth and the Life. Together let us look forward to the day when — perhaps in your own dear land, rejoicing in the title of Mary's dowry — we may sing together the hymn composed for your Congress:

*'Truth on my tongue, his way to guide my walking —
And I shall live, not I but Christ in me'.*

And it is in the name of Christ that I bless you all: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May 3, 1980

CONGRESS REPORTS

The reports which follow are the final reports of each topic group as presented to the sector meeting, followed by the report of each president, summing up the conclusions of the sector. The introduction to each set of reports is to clarify the status and importance of the reports and particularly of specific recommendations. For this purpose, some indication is given of the following:

- (i) the timetable followed by the sector;
- (ii) the number and size of topics and groups;
- (iii) the procedure used at topic level;
- (iv) the procedure used at sector level.

Other appropriate details, including sector and topic voting results, are given in the text where appropriate.

SECTOR A

Each of the topics had five discussion groups, except topic 5 which had three groups. Sector A followed the timetable entirely as set down in the background and history of the Congress. In the topic meetings a number of votes were taken on particular issues and the voting figures are given in the text. The agendas used at the topic meetings were formulated from the group reports by the topic chairmen. The draft reports prepared after the topic meetings on Sunday were revised by the topic group on the Monday in topics 3, 4 and 5.

In the sector meeting, voting was by show of hands and by agreement recorded as 'unanimous', 'almost unanimous', 'overwhelming' or 'majority'. After the topic chairmen had presented the final version of their reports, time was allowed for debate and proposed amendments from the floor, which were voted upon. Each of the recommendations was voted upon in turn. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

SECTOR A — TOPIC 1

THE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

Chairman: Mgr J. D. Crichton

To convey our understanding of what worship is, the topic group wish to make two affirmations: (1) it is in and through worship that we give glory to God and that we ourselves are sanctified; (2) it is in and through worship that we come to an understanding of ourselves as community and acquire a deeper sense of our mission to the world.

To remedy the existing lack of communication in diocese and parish and to ensure that there should be programmes of education and formation for a better understanding and celebration of the liturgy the group resolve that a national liturgical institute, in which both clergy and laity could be trained, is a necessity and should be set up as soon as possible.

Carried: 60 for, 2 against, 5 abstained.

Diocesan liturgical commissions and deaneries have an indispensable role in bringing to parishes the information and expertise necessary for an adequate understanding of the liturgy and for a better celebration of it. It is envisaged that deanery meetings should bring together both the laity and the clergy and that deanery-based groups should make their knowledge and experience available to individual parishes.

In addition, we urge that liturgical groups, open to all members of the parish, should be set up to work with the clergy. The involvement and ministry of the laity, both men and women, in the preparation and celebration of the liturgy is their right, based on their participation by baptism in the priesthood of Christ.

Carried: 64 for.

Small groups, house groups, neighbourhood groups which gather together for prayer, the study of scripture and the celebration of the eucharist are necessary for the building of the parish community and to promote a truly communal celebration of the liturgy. These could benefit especially the sick, the housebound and the handicapped.

We strongly affirm that the eucharist is a community celebration involving the maximum participation of the laity, each performing his or her respective role. The eucharistic community should also be a welcoming one to newcomers, visitors and others. The sense of community created in celebration should issue into caring for the community outside celebration and into mission for those who do not belong to the Church.

The topic group affirms the principle that the form of celebration should arise from the nature of the group celebrating and asks for the greatest possible variety of the celebration of the one eucharist (within the limits laid down by the present rite) to meet the needs of different ages and conditions, e.g., children, teenagers, ethnic groups and others.

A very large majority asks that Holy Communion should be given in both kinds as the norm. To facilitate this practice, as many lay ministers, both men and women, as are necessary, should be trained and commissioned.

In a discussion on the lectionary, it was approved of by some and criticised by others. The majority agreed that the study of the readings by smaller groups would lead to a better understanding of the lectionary.

A good deal of dissatisfaction about the quality of the Sunday homily was expressed. It was urged that one remedy would be discussion between clergy and laity gathered in a small group when preparing the Sunday liturgy. The topic group urge that there is a need for instruction in the faith and on the liturgy itself.

Three members of the Latin Mass Society made a plea that the 'Old Mass' be given parity with the rite of the Roman Missal of 1970.

Not carried: 10 for, 40 against, 9 abstained.

The other sacraments too are community celebrations; they should therefore involve the whole community. Baptism and the anointing of the sick should take place during the Mass as and when possible.

(Note: Confirmation and marriage were not included as these sacraments are normally celebrated during the Mass.)

Problems concerning baptism were discussed. If the sacrament should have to be delayed through lack of faith on the part of the parents, it was urged that there should be a service of blessing for the infants and that continuing efforts should be made to give the necessary instruction to the parents.

Confirmation is best seen as part of the process of Christian initiation and this consideration is more important than the question of the age at which it should be given. Nonetheless, the group affirms its view that a later age for confirmation is necessary if young people are to make a genuine commitment of faith. The age 13-15 was given as an example.

The celebration of the sacrament of confirmation should be more frequent so that the numbers receiving it should not be too great and that it might be a more personal experience for the recipients.

Preparation for confirmation requires much more support from parents, schools and sponsors and the latter should have a pastoral care for the candidates both before and after the celebration of the sacrament.

Three recommendations concerning the sacrament of penance were made:

- (a) greater use should be made of services of penance with individual absolution. These had been found helpful;

(b) opportunity for face-to-face confession should be provided for all who desire it;

(c) a review of the conditions for general absolution should be made.

(Note: the feeling of the topic group was that it should be possible to make more frequent use of the Third Rite, i.e., services of reconciliation and general absolution.)

The group affirm unanimously that the Church is a school of prayer, public prayer (the Divine Office), private and ecumenical prayer. Greater use should be made of the Divine Office both in church and at home. Likewise, traditional services, both eucharistic and non-eucharistic, should be made available to the people.

The group devoted a great deal of time to discussion of prayer and its members expressed a strong desire for further instruction and training in it.

The group recommend the permanent diaconate and see it as a necessary ministry in the pastoral work of the Church.

Where no voting figures are given, the recommendations given above won approval from the great majority of the topic group; they represent the 'mind of the meeting'.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting.

SECTOR A — TOPIC 2

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Chairman: Fr Tom Curtis Hayward

The group was anxious for reassurance that the record should be complete and passed the following resolution: That the reports of the discussion groups be recorded as part of the Congress proceedings.

The topic group considered the following recommendations:

1. Bishop, priest and people must set out together to implement the teaching and spirit of the Second Vatican Council in each and every parish.

2. In view of the fact that the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are not being sufficiently implemented, urgent consideration and provision should be given to a deeper formation of priest and people, so that they may work together in the spirit of the gospel.
3. In order to become a loving, caring, worshipping community, we recommend that parishes should become a communion of Christian communities incorporating small neighbourhood, area and special interest groups, including all the lapsed and practising. They should meet for prayer, social events and occasionally the eucharist, supporting one another in times of stress, sorrow and joy.
4. Young people are part of the church today — not just of the future — they should be encouraged to fulfil this role in ways appropriate to them in the local church.
5. In the light of *Lumen gentium* we feel that the presence of a parish and deanery/area council is necessary for the right ordering and mission of the local church.
6. A team ministry of priests and lay people should be developed at deanery level to meet special needs or provide special services which cannot be or are not provided at parish level. The availability of these services should be made universally known in parishes.
7. When a diocese is too large for the bishop to identify himself with his people as their true pastor, then area bishops should be appointed.
8. There should be a review of the system of appointing parish priests by seniority to ensure appropriateness — matching the needs of the area to the priest. His term of office should not be so short that he cannot get to know his people; on the other hand, after a period of ten years the situation should be revised.
9. Bishops should encourage priests to use facilities ecumenically at local level.
10. There is a need for the parish to promote itself to its own parishioners and to people outside. Use should be made of the media and help sought from the diocese or deanery information officer where needed.
11. Practising Catholics must make every effort to care for our lapsed brothers and sisters. They should be encouraged to take part in all parish life even though they may not be able to receive the sacraments.
12. Some form of equitable financial sharing should be made in the deanery or diocese to offset parochialism which could lead to major financial problems for some priests.

13. Greater co-operation of priests in parishes within deaneries is needed in regard to times of Mass, opportunities for confession, marriage instruction, etc., to reduce the work-load on individual priests.
14. The diocese and deanery must develop adult formation as a major priority, readily available to all so that the teaching of the Second Vatican Council can be received by God's people.
15. An effective system of communication within each diocese, deanery and parish is needed so that information can pass freely from bishop to priests and people, and back again.
16. Priests should encourage parishioners to recognise their right to exercise their lay ministry and should welcome their co-operation.
17. Priests and people should love one another.
Carried: 52 for, 8 against, 10 abstained.
18. Parishes can only be truly Roman Catholic if they seek to establish good positive relationships with other churches.
Carried: 53 for, 9 against, 8 abstained.
19. Each individual is called by Christ to life in community by his baptism. Therefore, whatever structures are needed should be there to assist the people of God to increase their personal spiritual relationship with God and with one another.

Where no voting figures appear, the recommendations won the approval of a large majority of the topic group. In many cases they were carried unanimously.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

SECTOR A — TOPIC 3

CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND CONSULTATION

Chairperson: Sr Ellen Gielty SND

A new vision

From the discussion of co-responsibility a vision emerged of priests and people working together in their local community to build up a Church which was a source of spiritual strength and an inspiration in

daily life. To bring about the realisation of such a vision, there is a clear need for priests and people to have a better understanding of their roles in the Church.

The Second Vatican Council has provided us with a new perspective on the laity but there are still many places where people are ignorant of this view and its implications for parish life. Other problems arise from the fact that all the teaching of the Church since the end of the Council has been based on the principles enunciated during it, and very many Catholics, priests and laity, are being left behind, feeling uninformed and insecure.

Need for continuing education

There is a clear need for further information and formation in faith. The topic group puts forward practical suggestions to promote such formation. More thought should be given to the designing of programmes of education directed towards priests and people. Already, in most dioceses, priests are expected to attend in-service courses at least every second year, but somehow these courses have no direct visible effect on ordinary parish life. Courses or talks for the laity planned to go on concurrently, the whole programme taking place in the parish context, could achieve a greater impact. Some parish and deanery missions are known already to have taken this form and priests and people have acknowledged that they experienced encouragement by having some sessions together and others separately. The practical difficulties involved in setting up these programmes within the parish, arising from the wide range of education and experience found in that unit, are no greater than the problems which face every priest when preparing his Sunday homily.

Not only is there a need for more input on the teaching of the Church on matters pertaining to Mass, the sacraments, moral and social issues, but ways must be found of helping all members of the Church to understand their responsibilities within the Church. All too often lay people depend too much on the priest, expecting him to make all the decisions and to take all the initiatives. Priests, too, act as if they are custodians of all that goes on in the Church.

Many lay people have special skills and the energy to take on duties which priests ought to shed, so that they can get on with the work for which they have been ordained. One member of the group was able to tell of a parish where there is a full-time lay administrator. Experiments such as this one can reveal what benefits may follow from a real sharing of responsibility and what may be the drawbacks.

Structures for sharing responsibility

Normally, lay members of the Church fulfil their responsibilities by working with their priests through approved parish structures. There was a call from all groups for effective councils at parish, deanery and diocesan level. Such councils would be a training ground for priests and people to learn the implications of forming together Christ's body, while separately they are different parts of it, with particular gifts and functions.

Needs vary from place to place, therefore the structure and functions of these councils would differ, making flexibility a necessary characteristic. In some places, one representative group can function effectively, whereas in others an open 'parish-in-council' situation would be more appropriate. More and more priests are working alone in parishes and clearly need the help of their people. Responsibility may be shared out of necessity and care must be taken that this is not confused with mere delegation. The groups stressed the need for education in the implications and procedures of shared responsibility. All those involved take on a serious duty of seeing things through. Since there is no history of co-responsibility in our experience of church, a good deal of learning 'on the job' will have to take place. Young people want to be given a place in these structures and they too ask to be taken seriously. So often, young people, who are as truly the Church of today as they are the Church of tomorrow, feel excluded from ordinary parish life. We need to dialogue with them — really listening and speaking to them.

Team ministries

Delegates pointed to team ministries as examples of shared responsibility. Such teams would consist of a group of priests and religious working together in a parish and calling on lay people to help create a living parish.

Making use of the deanery structure

During the preparation for the Congress, delegates have become aware of belonging to a local church, meeting people from their deanery and working with them. A deanery often yields resources, both human and material, which an individual parish does not possess. In rural areas, the deanery can be too extensive to be used practically, but even here there were some advantages. There is a growing sense in the local church of how people can help each other. The formation of study groups and prayer groups are already creating a source of spiritual strength and support,

and if these can be introduced in more places, ordinary people would have a greater sense of a co-responsible church which is very much alive. Such signs of life are in themselves an encouragement and a thriving community is more attractive than one which is dying.

Co-responsibility and the bishops

The topic group also formulated some ideas on the part played by the bishop. He has a key role in the area of shared responsibility. Not only does he have to share responsibility with his priests but he must be seen to encourage this sharing with the laity too. The groups called for more leadership from the bishops, especially in insisting on in-service courses for parish priests and other clergy. The bishops have committed themselves to adult formation as a priority in this country. Evidence of this commitment will be looked for on a widespread scale, especially after the Congress. There was a feeling that people would like to see more of their bishop. A little personal contact goes further than a long pastoral letter. Perhaps there should be more bishops, and these should not be mere administrators. Bishops too need to be freed from extraneous responsibilities in order to minister to their people as true pastors.

The meaning of consultation

Consultation is an essential part of co-responsibility. Again it is an area in which much more education is required. Good consultation presupposes an effective communication system. When an important decision is to be made in a diocese, deanery or parish, all relevant information should be given to priests and people. There is need for trust and openness on all sides. The implications of the decision should be spelt out, particularly to those people who are to be involved in putting it into practice. If the decision which the consultation process clearly led to is not carried out, the reasons should be given to those consulted. Only personal matters should be exempt from the consultation process. Although it is hoped that bishops and priests will consult their people before important decisions are taken, the delegates strongly affirmed that anyone can initiate the consultation process, i.e., a lay person need not wait until invited before bringing up a topic which is of concern to the community. Anyone moved to take such an initiative would be acting according to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council which positively encourages in laity a 'confident liberty' in making known to pastors their needs and desires. Indeed, it may well be a duty for them because of the gifts God has given them. People who act in this way should surely do so in a spirit of 'sincerity, courage and prudence' and with the good of the Church in mind. (*Lumen gentium* n. 37.)

Healthy criticism is a sign of life because it is an indication of continuing self-evaluation. Sometimes people confuse self-criticism with disloyalty while others use the charge of disloyalty to prevent any kind of growth or change.

Shared responsibility and spiritual renewal

Finally, all groups touched on the need for spiritual renewal at every level. Consultation involves dialogue which is a kind of self-emptying. It is based on a belief that the Spirit of God is present in everyone. Co-responsibility demands a level of commitment which draws its strength from a living faith supported by prayer and the sacraments. A co-responsible community is a group gathered together in prayer, ministering to one another according to God-given gifts, and proclaiming a faith which begins in the heart but reaches out to the world. This spiritual renewal is so important that it should be the starting point of all our efforts. We should be challenged to respond to our baptismal responsibilities. The words 'Christian education and formation' can remain very bland, but when translated into 'being formed in the likeness of Christ' their dynamism is fully revealed. The person who is formed in Christ is committed to him and to his Church because formation leads to a deeper understanding of mission. Commitment expresses itself in action and in practical terms this means giving time and talent to the upbuilding of the community. There is a clear connection between formation, commitment and co-responsibility. As we understand it, co-responsibility is a spiritual exercise demanding openness and change of heart.

Proposed recommendations

The members of topic 3 wish to present the following recommendations to the whole of sector A:

1. There should be a wholehearted call to spiritual renewal and commitment in all of us: bishops, clergy and laity. Therefore we recommend that all members of the Congress resolve to make that call heard, first in their own hearts, and then in the milieux in which they live.
2. Parish, deanery and diocesan councils are appropriate channels through which consultation can be set in motion, and when these bodies are truly representative of bishops, priests and people they facilitate the exercise of co-responsibility. Therefore we propose:

- (a) that an active council, open or representative, should be established as an essential component in the life and organisation of every parish,
 - (b) that such a council should have the right and duty to discuss with the parish priest all matters affecting the parish as a community and to make recommendations to him. Where the final decision belongs to the parish priest the council is entitled to an explanation of any refusal he may make to its recommendations,
 - (c) that deanery pastoral councils representative of priests and people be established as a means of co-ordinating and influencing the thought and work of parishes within the deanery,
 - (d) that a diocesan pastoral council representative of bishops, clergy and laity be established in every diocese to communicate and co-ordinate thought and work within the diocese, and to assist in the creation and direction of a pastoral strategy.
3. Christian education and formation are vital at every stage of life. Therefore we call on the bishops to take every opportunity to insist on continuing formation for all, lay and clerical, and to guarantee human and material resources to build up necessary programmes.
 4. The need for solidarity and co-operation among Christians is essential in what is often described as a godless society. Therefore we recommend most strongly that we take practical steps to consult with other Churches about the areas of fruitful collaboration.
Further, we recommend that consultation with other Churches be built into the work of all the above councils at diocesan, deanery and parish levels.

These recommendations were voted upon by the topic group. All were carried by large majorities.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Chairman: Fr Peter Ryan

Our report must begin with an expression of thanks to God for the marvellous progress towards Christian unity that has taken place during the past 15 years.

We should like to go on record as expressing our gratitude to the theologians who have done so much for the cause of Christian unity during the last decade through their work nationally on the Ecumenical Commission for England and Wales and internationally on the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, the Methodist/Roman Catholic Commission, the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Commission and the Reformed/Roman Catholic Commission. Our prayers go with those participating in the coming talks with the Orthodox.

As a group we feel deeply conscious of the unity that already exists between all Christians, arising from our common baptism and commitment to Christ. All our thinking as a group stems from this awareness. We feel close to our fellow Christians.

We believe that the parish priest is the key figure insofar as Catholic involvement in ecumenism is concerned, for the fact is that the ecumenically committed layman can do little within the parish structure without the backing of the parish priest. The topic group is deeply concerned that this backing is not forthcoming in very many parishes. We urge our bishops to use the occasion of their parish visitations to help their priests to see that since the Second Vatican Council concern for unity is not to be seen as an optional extra but as an essential characteristic of the Catholic Christian. As the Council put it in the Decree on Ecumenism: 'Concern for the establishment of unity is a matter for the whole Church, faithful and pastors alike' (*Decree on Ecumenism* n. 5).

As a group we were profoundly concerned about the question of eucharistic hospitality. Our baptismal communion with our fellow Christians in the other Churches should lead on to eucharistic communion and it is a terrible anomaly that it does not. We long for the day when Catholics and other Christians will be able to meet in total eucharistic fellowship. Whilst rejecting any movement towards indiscriminate intercommunion, we nevertheless recognise that the possibility now exists of inviting our fellow Christians to receive communion at a Catholic Mass in certain situations. We are united as a group in asking our bishops to look

again at the situation in England and Wales and to consider the possibility of making provision for eucharistic hospitality in certain cases.

We are also deeply concerned about the plight of committed Christians in inter-Church marriages who, though united through the sacraments of baptism and matrimony, constantly suffer the pain of separation at the altar. We urge that our bishops should make provision for the non-Catholic partner in such marriages to be welcomed to communion in the Catholic Church, at least on special occasions — always providing that his or her eucharistic faith agrees with that of the Catholic Church.

There are, we believe, appropriate occasions for offering eucharistic hospitality to non-Catholics. Examples would be:

- (1) to the non-Catholic spouse at a nuptial mass;
- (2) to the non-Catholic parent at a baptismal mass;
- (3) to the non-Catholic parent on the occasion of a child's first communion and confirmation;
- (4) to close relatives of inter-Church couples at weddings, funerals and other special family occasions.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, and we are aware that the need to receive communion together is, and should be, a continuing one in the spiritual life of married Christians.

With regard to eucharistic sharing, the Decree on Ecumenism declares that sharing of this kind is based on two principles: 'Expression of the unity of the Church and sharing in the means of grace. Expression of unity excludes sharing for the most part. The grace to be won sometimes recommends it'. Later Church rulings have been more restrictive. We should like to urge the highest authorities in the Catholic Church to look again at the implications of that phrase 'The grace to be won sometimes recommends it'. (*Decree on Ecumenism*, n. 8).

Carried: 209 for, 24 against, 42 abstentions.

As a topic group we are very much aware of the close connection between unity and mission. Our Lord prayed that his followers might be one that the world might believe. Our disunity is a terrible counter-witness.

Since mission and unity are so closely linked, we believe that unity must help mission and mission unity. We are then unanimously in favour of Catholic sharing wherever possible in joint Christian mission, and we are convinced that such joint mission can help tremendously in the work

of building unity at the local level. Christians working and praying together on joint local projects are experiencing this now. We would recommend that when Christians are working closely together in mission eucharistic hospitality should be extended.

On the same subject of unity at the local level, we believe that Catholic parishes ought to be members of local councils of Churches, and indeed, in an area where no such council exists, Catholics should be prepared to take the initiative in forming one and should ensure that any Eastern Churches are included.

We recommend that the Catholic Church in England and Wales apply for full membership of the British Council of Churches. We believe that our remaining outside the Council puts a permanent question mark over the serious commitment of the Catholic Church in this country to the cause of Christian unity.

With a totally united voice we likewise ask our bishops to do all in their power to encourage the sharing of the resources of the Churches. Continuing to construct separate plant without consulting other Christian Churches helps to institutionalise our divisions and to impede progress towards unity. The group is strongly in favour of the establishment of joint Christian schools (in situations where this is practicable) and is encouraged to hear that the Liverpool Commission for Ecumenism is helping to prepare an ecumenical religious education syllabus. We should also like to see as much sharing as possible between the Churches in the training of priests and ministers.

The question was raised in the group of the difficulties that arise when an ecumenically-minded priest or minister leaves an area and is replaced by someone of a very different cast of mind. Such moves can transform ecumenical oases into deserts. The group is convinced that the establishment of local ecumenical covenants can prevent this sort of thing happening, and we ask our bishops to encourage the setting up of such covenants wherever practicable.

Some years ago a very useful pamphlet was produced by a working group set up by the Roman Catholic Church and the British Council of Churches with the title *The Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Marriages*. Several years after its appearance little seems to have happened in the dioceses to provide the kind of on-going care that the working group recommended, and we ask our bishops to take action to remedy this situation.

We underline the importance of the so-called Lund principle which states that Christians in their separation should do everything together

except what conscience forces them to do apart. Perhaps the final recommendation of the topic group to our bishops is that they should always keep this principle in mind and do all that they can — using the structures available, diocesan commissions for ecumenism, deanery councils, parish councils, etc. — to encourage its observance by the Catholics of this country.

We invite those Catholics who still hesitate to undertake the quest for unity to join us in an act of faith in the power of Christ to achieve in the near future that which seems to many to be only a distant hope. Unity is his gift — not our human achievement.

All the recommendations contained in this report were passed by large majorities in the topic meeting.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

SECTOR A — TOPIC 5

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP AND CHURCH FINANCES

Chairman: Michael Carey

In the topic group, a description of Christian Stewardship emerged as 'the use of all we are and have — soul, body, time and wealth — wisely and generously for the love of Christ to the glory of God and the good of our neighbour, knowing that we will be accountable to God for such use, since we only return to God what is rightly his'.

Stewardship includes the fullest use of our talents and resources in the service of the parish, diocese and national Church, having regard to the needs of the universal Church and of the Third World. Our stewardship must extend to the wider community, for example, local government, political bodies and trade unions. Christian stewardship should not be restricted to financial matters; it should be understood to involve all that people contribute to the mission of the Church, particularly their time and talents.

The topic group, therefore, sees the whole question of Christian stewardship as being basic to our Christian commitment and not an optional extra.

Recommendations

1. The Conference of Bishops be asked to consider initiating a national programme of education in the practical responsibilities of Christian stewardship in its full meaning.
2. Such a new initiative should include each parish being asked to consider carefully how to find ways of raising the level of consciousness amongst parishioners in Christian stewardship. To this end parishes should plan their activities over, for example, a three-year cycle based on perceived local priorities and subject to an annual review. This planning would include all activities ranging from the life of prayer of the individual, the liturgy, the development of organisations, adult religious formation, the ecumenical movement, social welfare services to those in need both in the parish and in the wider community, the regular maintenance of buildings, and the use of schools and the planning of new buildings, where necessary. In this way, the total available resources of time, talents and finance could be more effectively deployed and suitable structures such as parish councils be brought into being where they do not exist.
3. Ministries like the permanent diaconate should be encouraged as ministries of action both spiritual and practical. With those ministers as leaders and in support of the local priests, the full involvement of parishioners should be sought and in this way Christian stewardship could be made effective.
4. Each parish should be made aware of its responsibilities for contributing directly a percentage of its ordinary income to the Third World and the church in need, either through CAFOD or other approved organisations or by direct twinning in consultation with the bishop of the diocese.
5. A public acknowledgement should be made of the immense contribution in terms of time, talent and money made by religious orders to local churches and dioceses. The Conference of Major Religious Superiors should be supported and thanked for its continuing efforts in the deployment and redeployment of man/woman-power and resources. As a practical expression of their gratitude, the laity could and should encourage and promote vocations to the religious life.

FINANCE

It is recognised that, both at the diocesan and parish levels, conduct of financial affairs is carried out effectively and efficiently in many instances, but this situation is not invariable and there is room for improvement.

Recommendations

6. In each diocese, where this does not happen already, the Finance Board should include suitably qualified laity. Appropriate diocesan and parochial financial statements should be readily available in parishes.
7. Each diocese should maintain in some appropriate form the organisation set up for the Congress in order to facilitate communication concerning Christian stewardship.
8. Training and instruction in organisational and financial matters should be given both in the seminary and, even more importantly, at in-service training courses after ordination.
9. The parish should become aware of the pool of talent available in a parish not only of those actively involved in various organisations but also those who are prevented by age, sickness or for other serious reasons from active participation and who by their prayers as 'lay contemplatives' could constitute a spiritual power-house of the parish.

These recommendations were passed by large majorities in the topic meeting.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

A. — THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND RELATIONSHIP

1. AS the Sector of the National Pastoral Congress most directly concerned with the subjects of shared responsibility and consultation within the People of God we unanimously express our deep appreciation of the initiative undertaken by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, with the full support of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, to convene the historic National Pastoral Congress, in order to enlist the full resources of the whole Church in England and Wales in a review of the pastoral work of that Church, and in planning for its future. We thank God for the joyful privilege and experience of Christian sharing with our brothers and sisters, bishops, priests, deacons, religious, laity and representatives of other Churches, which have been ours during these days.
2. In the various topics entrusted to our consideration, the overwhelming number of proposals was carried unanimously, or with near unanimity, or by a very large majority. In very many instances the number of delegates opposed was consistent and very small indeed.

RENEWAL AND FORMATION

3. We resolved overwhelmingly that there must be a wholehearted call to spiritual renewal and commitment in all of us, bishops, clergy and laity, and we recommend that all members of the Congress resolve to make that call heard, first in their own hearts, and then in the milieu in which they live. We also recognise that Christian stewardship in its fullest sense must be seen as the use of all we are and have, soul, body, time and wealth, wisely and generously for the love of Christ to the glory of God and the good of our neighbour, knowing that we will be accountable to God for such use, since we only return to God what is rightfully his.

4. We affirm that local provision must be made for instruction and training in prayer, acknowledging the Church to be a school of prayer, public (in the Divine Office), private and ecumenical, and we strongly urge that greater use of the Prayer of the Church be made in churches and homes, and also that, in addition to liturgical worship, traditional services, both eucharistic and other, should be made available.
5. We strongly affirm that Christian formation and education are vital at every stage of life, and we therefore call upon the bishops to take every opportunity to *insist* on continuing formation for all, lay and clerical, and to provide as far as possible human and material resources to build up the necessary programmes. In view of the fact that the teachings of Vatican II are not being sufficiently implemented, urgent provision and consideration should be given to a deeper formation of priest and people so that they may work together in the spirit of the gospel. The diocese and deanery must develop adult formation as a major priority, readily available on call so that the spirit and teaching of the Second Vatican Council can be received by God's people.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

6. We unanimously affirm that each individual is called by Christ to life in community by his baptism, and we also affirm that whatever structures are needed in Christian community should be there to assist the people of God to increase their personal spiritual relationship with God and with one another, including the mutual love for each other which should exist between priests and people.
7. We strongly affirm that the eucharist as a community celebration should involve maximum participation of the laity, each performing his or her respective role; that the eucharistic community be a welcoming one to newcomers, visitors and others, and that the sense of community created in celebration should issue into caring for the community outside celebration as well as into mission for those who do not belong to the Church. Not only the eucharist, but all the sacraments should be acknowledged as in principle community celebrations, which should involve the whole community, and baptism and anointing of the sick should take place during the eucharist as and when possible.

PARISH

8. In order to become such a loving, caring, worshipping community, we overwhelmingly recommend that parishes should become a com-

munion of Christian communities incorporating small, neighbourhood, area, and special interest groups including all, the lapsed and the practising. They should meet for prayer, social events and occasionally the eucharist, supporting one another in times of stress, sorrow and joy. Such small groups, house groups and neighbourhood groups, for prayer, study of scripture, and celebration of the eucharist, especially for the sick, the housebound and the handicapped must be seen as necessary for the building up of the parish community and as an aid to celebration. Liturgical groups should be established in parishes to work with the clergy, and as a consequence of our common participation by baptism in the priesthood of Christ, the maximum involvement and ministry of the laity, both men and women, without discrimination, should be encouraged in the preparation and celebration of the liturgy.

9. Bishop, priest and people must set out together to implement the teaching and spirit of Vatican II in each and every parish. There is a need for the parish to promote itself to its own parishioners and to people outside. We should make use of the media, and seek help from the diocesan or deanery information officer where needed. Practising Catholics must make every effort to care for our lapsed brothers and sisters. They should be encouraged to take part in all parish life even though they may not be able to receive the sacraments. Priests should encourage parishioners to recognise their right to exercise their lay ministry and should welcome their co-operation.
10. Parishes can only be truly Catholic if they seek to establish good positive relationships with other churches. Since the parish priest is a key figure insofar as Catholic involvement in ecumenism is concerned, the bishops are strongly urged to use the occasion of their parish visitations to help their priest realise that concern for unity is an essential characteristic of the Catholic Christian. Bishops should encourage priests to use facilities ecumenically at local level. There should be Catholic sharing wherever possible in joint Christian mission, since such joint mission can also help tremendously in the work of building unity at local levels. Catholic parishes ought to be members of local Councils of Churches, if necessary taking the initiative to form such a Council.
11. Each parish should be made aware of its responsibilities for contributing directly a percentage of its ordinary income to the Third World and the Church in need, either through CAFOD or other approved organisations, or by direct twinning in consultation with the bishop of the diocese. The permanent diaconate is recommended and seen as a necessary ministry in the pastoral work of the Church;

and in order to spread stewardship in local areas, ministries such as diaconal service should be encouraged as ministries of *action* both spiritual and practical. With these ministers as leaders and in support of the local priests, the full involvement of parishioners should be sought and in this way Christian stewardship could be made to be and be seen to be effective.

12. A basic training and instruction in organisational and financial matters should be given both in seminary and even more importantly at in-service training courses after priestly ordination. There should be a review of the system of appointing parish priests by seniority to ensure appropriateness — matching the needs of the area to the priest. His term of office should not be so short that he cannot get to know his people; on the other hand, after a period of ten years the situation should be reviewed.
13. The parish should become aware of the pool of talent available to it not only of those actively involved in various organisations but also those who are prevented by age, sickness or other serious reasons from active participation and who by their prayers as 'lay contemplatives' could constitute a spiritual powerhouse of the parish. Young people are part of the Church today, not just of the Church of the future. They should be encouraged to fulfil this role in ways appropriate to them in the local church.
14. A national programme of education in the practical responsibilities of Christian stewardship in its full meaning should be set in train by the Conference of Bishops. This should include each parish being asked to consider carefully how to find ways of raising the level of consciousness amongst parishioners on Christian stewardship. To this end parishes should plan their activities over, say, a three years' cycle based on perceived local priorities and subject to annual review. This planning would range over all activities, including the life of prayer of the individual, the liturgy, the development of organisations, adult religious formation, the ecumenical movement, social welfare services to those in need both in the parish and in the wider community, the regular maintenance of buildings and the use of schools and the planning of new buildings, where necessary.
15. In this way the total available resources of time, talent and finance could be more effectively deployed, and suitable structures such as parish councils be brought into being where they do not exist. In the light of *Lumen gentium* we feel that the presence of a parish and deanery or area council is necessary for the right ordering and mission of the local church.

16. Parish, deanery and diocesan councils are appropriate channels through which consultation can be set in motion, and when these bodies are truly representative of bishops, priests and people they facilitate the exercise of co-responsibility. Therefore we propose that an active council, open or representative, should be established as an essential component in the life and organisation of every parish. Such a council should have the right and duty to discuss with the parish priest all matters affecting the parish as a community and to make recommendations to him. Where the final decision belongs to the parish priest the council is entitled to an explanation of any refusal which he may make to its recommendations.

DEANERY

17. Deanery Pastoral Councils representative of priests and people should be established as a means of co-ordinating and influencing the thought and work of parishes within the deanery. A team ministry of priests and lay people should be developed at deanery level to meet special needs or provide special services which cannot be, or are not, provided at parish level. The availability of these services should be made known universally in parishes.
18. Greater co-operation of priests in parishes within deaneries is needed in regard to times of Mass, opportunity for confession, marriage instruction, etc., to reduce the work load on individual priests. Regular deanery meetings should be arranged for clergy and laity, drawing upon expert co-operation to provide information and experience in the liturgy, and diocesan liturgical commissions should aid deanery-based groups with their knowledge and experience.

DIOCESE

19. When a diocese is too large for a bishop to identify himself with his people as the true pastor, then either smaller dioceses should be established or area bishops should be appointed. Some form of equitable financial sharing should be made in the deanery or diocese to offset parochialism, which could lead to major financial problems for some priests. An effective system of communication within each diocese, deanery and parish is needed so that information can pass freely between bishop, priests and people. The bishops should do all in their power to encourage the sharing of the resources of the Churches, recognising that continuing to construct separate plants can help to institutionalise our division and to impede progress to unity.

20. A diocesan pastoral council representative of bishops, clergy and laity should be established in every diocese to communicate and co-ordinate thought and work within the diocese, and to assist in the creation and direction of a pastoral strategy. In each diocese where this does not exist already, the Finance Board should include suitable qualified laity, and appropriate diocesan and parochial financial statements should be readily available in parishes. Each diocese should maintain in some appropriate form the organisation set up for the Congress, in order to facilitate communication concerning Christian stewardship in the full sense described above.
21. The need for solidarity and co-operation among Christians is essential in what is often described as a godless society. Therefore we recommend most strongly that practical steps be taken to consult with other Churches about areas of fruitful collaboration. Further, we recommend that consultation with other Churches be built into the work of all diocesan, deanery and parish councils.
22. In addition to this overall vision of the Christian community which we also strongly insist is, and must be, a practicable reality, we have the following further particular points to stress in the areas of Christian unity and of worship.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

23. We give thanks to God for the marvellous progress towards Christian unity which has taken place during the past fifteen years. We acknowledge the work of the theologians who have done so much for the cause of Christian unity during the last decade through their work on various Commissions; and we express our gratitude to all those concerned for their tireless work for unity over many years. We urge the bishops always to keep in mind the principle that Christians in their separation should do everything together except what conscience forces them to do apart, and to encourage its observance by the Catholics of this country.
24. Since our remaining outside the British Council of Churches puts a permanent question mark against the serious commitment of our Church in this country to the cause of Christian unity, we strongly urge the bishops to reconsider the question of the entry of the Catholic Church in England and Wales into the British Council of Churches. We recommend that encouragement be given to the establishment of joint Christian schools, and that as much sharing as possible be undertaken in the training of priests and ministers. To

ensure ecumenical continuity in a locality in spite of changes or transfer of clergy we urge that local ecumenical covenants be established wherever practicable.

25. We find it a terrible anomaly that our baptismal communion with our fellow-Christians does not lead to eucharistic communion as it should, and we long for the day when Catholics and other Christians will be able to meet in total eucharistic fellowship. At the same time we reject any movement towards indiscriminate inter-communion. We recognise, however, that the possibility now exists of inviting our fellow Christians to receive Communion at a Catholic Mass in certain circumstances and we ask our bishops to reconsider the situation in England and Wales, and to consider the possibility of making provision for eucharistic hospitality in certain cases.
26. The cases we have in mind are those of the non-Catholic partners in inter-Church marriages who are already united through the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. We urge that provision be made for the partner to be welcomed to Communion in the Catholic Church, at least on special occasions, always providing that his or her eucharistic faith agrees with that of the Catholic Church.
27. The occasions which we have in mind include the non-Catholic spouse at a nuptial Mass, and close relatives of inter-Church couples at weddings and funerals, the non-Catholic spouse at a family baptism or confirmation, or other special family occasions. We also urge the highest authorities in the Catholic Church to reconsider the implications of the statements of the phrase of the Second Vatican Council concerning eucharistic sharing, that 'the grace to be won sometimes recommends it'. (There voted for this resolution on Communion and inter-Church marriages 209 in favour and 24 against, with 42 abstentions.)

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

28. We strongly urge that in order to remedy lack of liturgical communication in diocese and parishes, and to ensure the provision of programmes of education and formation for a better understanding and celebration of the liturgy, a National Liturgical Institute be established in which both clergy and laity may be trained.
29. The form of celebration of the eucharist should arise from the nature of the group celebrating. There should be the greatest possible variety of celebration of the one eucharist (within the limits laid down by

the present rite) to meet the needs of different conditions and ages; children, teenagers, ethnic groups and others.

30. The reception of Holy Communion under both kinds should be regarded as the norm. And as many lay ministers, both men and women, as are necessary for this and other purposes should be trained and commissioned.
31. If and when baptism should have to be delayed through lack of faith on the part of parents, a service of blessing for their infants should be held and efforts be made to give the necessary instruction to the parents.
32. Confirmation is best seen as part of the process of Christian initiation, and although this consideration is more important than discussion of the age at which it should be conferred, nevertheless a later age is necessary for young people to be able to make a genuine commitment of faith. The celebration of confirmation should be more frequent so that the numbers receiving it should not be too great, and its celebration should be more personal. Preparation for confirmation involves more support from parents, schools and sponsors, and sponsors should have care for the candidates before, during and after the celebration of the sacrament.
33. Greater use should be made of penance or reconciliation services with individual absolutions. Opportunity should be provided for all who wish face-to-face confession. The conditions for general absolution should be reviewed.

CONCLUSION

34. Finally, in the atmosphere of Christian fraternal co-responsibility and relationship and in the one Holy Spirit of truth, we warmly commend to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales the deliberations, resolutions and recommendations of this Sector at group, topic and Sector levels, together with those of the Congress in other Sectors. And we wholeheartedly recommend and confidently anticipate, in the God-given spirit of joy in this Congress, a continuation, development and extension at all levels in the Church of the processes of genuine shared responsibility and full consultation, which have been initiated in preparation for, and during, this National Pastoral Congress.

SECTOR B

Sector B followed the timetable as set down in the background and history of the Congress. Each of the topics, except topic 4, had five groups. Topic 4 had six groups.

Topic meetings were based on the agendas formulated from the group reports by the topic chairmen. Voting did not occur except on a few issues in topics 1 and 5 (figures are given in the text) and in giving general agreement to the topic report. In topics 2, 3, 4 and 5, actual recommendations were formulated at a fairly late stage, in some cases only at the Monday morning session.

The procedure followed at the sector meeting was that indicated in the general account of the Congress. The order in which the topics were taken was reversed slightly, with topic 2 taken first, then topics 3, 4 and 5 and then finally topic 1. To allow the maximum number of contributors from the floor, delegates were asked not to comment on their own topic reports other than to clarify points and to limit themselves to no more than one comment on each issue. Votes were taken on the preambles to each topic report and on the recommendations individually. In most cases a substantial majority was obvious and in many cases there was unanimity. Counting was unnecessary except on a few recommendations in topics 1 and 5.

SECTOR B — TOPIC 1

ORDAINED MINISTRIES

Chairman: Fr Bob Spence

BISHOPS

1. There is a strong call for the establishment of smaller dioceses. In these smaller dioceses the bishops will be able to know every priest personally. Amongst his people he will be known first and foremost

as a preacher of the gospel and a teacher. He will be ready to use every modern method to communicate well with his people. In trying to relate the gospel to family, national and international life, he will not wait until Catholics are in a defensive situation. A significant minority holds that area bishops appointed either to geographical areas or areas of expertise will solve the problem of our too large dioceses better.

2. It is urgent that our bishops should lead us in trying to understand and apply the teaching of the Church (especially of the Second Vatican Council) in our distinctive English and Welsh context.
3. There is some feeling that our bishops should keep us more clearly informed about their dialogue with Rome and other episcopal conferences. The issue of general absolution was raised.
4. We want to suggest sensitively to our bishops and priests that they consider carefully the length of time they can best serve a diocese or parish as bishop or parish priest.

PRIESTS

5. Co-responsibility is crucial. People and priests must in every parish or pastoral situation work together in confident partnership. We need a relaxed situation where priests are encouraged to share responsibility with lay people and people care for the priest who is serving them. The priest must be free to pray, celebrate the sacraments well and to teach.
6. We must search for ways to improve relationships between priests and people. There should be a stress on situations such as small groups, house masses, prayer groups, which will enable priest and people to listen and talk to each other.
7. It is a top priority that every priest should accept regular periods of in-service training and spiritual renewal as a normal part of his priestly life. This is so much a priority that it will lead us to accept that some parishes will be left without Sunday Mass during these times.
8. We should pay particular attention to fostering personal and spiritual maturity in the men who are to be ordained priests. Proper use should be made of sound psychology both in the assessment and preparation of candidates for ordination. We should examine carefully ways of training priests outside the seminary. The training of priests

does not end with ordination. Practical training in the early years after ordination is very important. But more important is the insistence that a priest's training should be continuous throughout life.

9. There are many situations where teams composed of lay people, deacon, sister and priest could operate more effectively than a multiplicity of isolated one-man parishes.
10. A priest should be a man who proclaims the gospel clearly and imaginatively, who cries out the gospel with the whole of his life, who is compassionate and kind, willing to spend himself, a man of deep joy. A man able to receive as much as he is able to give. His communion with the Lord makes him a healer, a bridge builder, a reconciler.
11. More should be done by the local Catholic community to foster vocations to the priesthood, particularly among sixth formers, university and college students, young adults and within the family.
12. (a) We recognise the inestimable value of celibacy in the Church's mission and in the priesthood in particular.
Carried unanimously.
- (b) We feel the Church must consider most carefully whether it may not be God's will that married men also be called to the priesthood.
Carried: 37 for, 15 against, 5 abstained.
13. The admission of women to the ordained ministries is a topic requiring further detailed exploration and discussion.
Carried: 30 for, 21 against, 6 abstained.

DEACONS

14. We recognise that the diaconate is an order in its own right. This ministry is a clear sign of the Church's willingness to serve in areas of great need. The witness of the diaconate is especially important in the world of work and married life.
15. While being positive about the diaconate we say that there is a need for the Church in England and Wales to be led to a clearer understanding of this ministry and how it should operate in our countries.

16. It is very important that stress on a permanent diaconate should not stifle lay ministries. Deacons should rather be trained to encourage these ministries.
17. It is essential that we propose to all ordained ministers the need to strive to realise their ministry in an evangelical way — a life of simplicity, poverty, openness and availability to all men and women in imitation of Christ, the suffering servant. 'Cry the Gospel with your whole life' (*Charles de Foucauld*).
18. There was an almost unanimous and good-humoured recognition that bishops and priests are doing a good job that is well appreciated.

Except where figures are given, these recommendations were accepted by the majority of the topic group.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. Where counts were taken, figures are given in the text.

SECTOR B — TOPIC 2

THE COMMUNITY AND OTHER MINISTRIES

Chairman: Mr David Hobman

Whilst we are all members of many communities our community is Christ-centred through its worship, its teaching and its service. It is not confined within administrative boundaries. It is the living expression of the people of God wherever they may be. Whilst the parish provides the primary focus, it must be sufficiently flexible to promote the growth of smaller groups. We believe, therefore, that priests and parish leaders must be more active in promoting networks of informal groupings which are, by their nature, more personal and loving than is normally possible in the corporate life of the parish as a whole.

Christ himself created a community distinguished by its members' total acceptance of each other through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If we are to return to the simple way and to follow in the footsteps of that first Christian community, we must re-discover how to express this sense of care and respect for each other which then leads us to give witness to our love for all people.

The eucharist is the centre of the life of our community, but if the liturgy is to have its full meaning it must be developed and given life by the people of God together in a dynamic partnership, so that all can participate fully, for example, through the organisation and training of readers, the music ministry, the offertory procession, the ministry of welcome, the training and organisation of altar servers, and development of acolytes and special ministers of the eucharist.

We look, therefore, for more positive encouragement and more energetic leadership from our bishops and our priests as well as a more active response from the laity, in developing an adaptable approach to the liturgy in relation to the differing settings in which we find ourselves.

There are many benefits to be derived from involvement in small groups. For example, prayer and discussion groups and house masses all provide opportunities for a living relationship between our prayers and the everyday circumstances of our lives.

Baptism enables us to participate in the various ministries. And so whilst recognising the priest's unique role as minister of sacrament and of word, we believe all other responsibilities must be shared among the people of God, and shared rather than delegated.

The priest should be an enabler who will need to create the circumstances in which the people as a whole can enter fully into the corporate life of their community.

There must be changes in attitudes on the part of bishops, priests and lay people. Programmes of spiritual renewal and practical retraining appropriate to a rapidly changing society are, therefore, vital and should represent a major priority.

Far greater use should be made of the adult education system, diocesan centres and study groups in the process of shared learning and exploration. Parishes should all build up libraries.

One mark of our caring community is the degree to which we are open to the needs of our neighbourhood.

The priest has a crucial role in encouraging this openness by his personal example and by ensuring that systems of contact and response exist and are capable of growth and development.

Mechanisms in some parishes are capable of adaptation and many long-standing well-established societies exist to meet the needs of large

numbers of people. However, there are also many individuals who do not wish, or who are unable, to extend their involvement beyond the small, immediate, and often unstructured group with whose members they can enjoy warm personal relationships and where they feel at ease.

One of the ways in which development in this connection might well take place could be through what we describe as 'Care Councils'. These could concentrate on the identification of needs, service-giving and social activities including, for example, support for minorities, ethnic groups, the unemployed, the disabled, for evangelisation and apostolic involvement. They can also make bridges with other denominations and secular agencies in ways which do not seem to be universally practised by parish councils where they exist.

We believe that the development of an effective and comprehensive community ministry, as the practical expression of co-responsibility, is dependent upon many factors. Perhaps the most crucial element is complete trust between priest and people. Here there is a clearly defined ministry for lay people in compensating for the isolation which is inherent in the priest's life.

However, at the same time adaptations must be made in anticipation of the growing shortage of priests. Domestic liturgies must be encouraged and lay people must be trained to offer leadership in those liturgies where the priest's presence is not essential and which do not involve the celebration of the Mass. These celebrations have the advantage of encouraging joint Christian worship and what we can do together should be done on an ecumenical basis.

It is also important that when priests are appointed care should be taken to ensure their skills and temperaments relate to the people with whom they are to live and work.

Communications, too, need to be improved. This must be done both by written material, the spoken word and through personal contact if the wealth of knowledge, experience and skill available is to be mobilised and if those people who are too diffident to come forward are to become more involved.

Better communications need to be related to a readiness to experiment and innovate on the part of those responsible for existing organisations. We must also be ready to abandon outmoded methods in favour of approaches which will be seen to be more appropriate for the times in which we live.

Proposals

1. We urge the Church to encourage and nurture small groups to give added vitality to our parishes.
2. We look for more positive encouragement and more energetic leadership from our bishops and priests, as well as a more active response from the laity in developing an adaptable approach to the liturgy.
3. Programmes of spiritual renewal and practical re-training appropriate to a rapidly changing society are vital and should represent a major priority. Whatever we can do together should be on an ecumenical basis.
4. Far greater use should be made of the adult education system, diocesan centres and study groups in the process of shared learning and exploration. Parishes should build up libraries.
5. We recommend the establishment of Care Councils which could concentrate on the identification of needs, service-giving and social activities, e.g., support for minorities, ethnic groups, the unemployed and the disabled.
6. Domestic liturgies must be encouraged and the laity must be trained in these liturgies.

All these recommendations were passed with large majorities.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. No counts were necessary.

SECTOR B — TOPIC 3

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Chairperson: Sr Catherine Hughes SND

Do we need to stop and look at what religious are or do we need to plunge into what they do, or should do, in the church and society today? What they are is a mystery, to themselves as well as to others, because each religious believes in a personal calling from God to be committed to him entirely and, as it were, officially. Their living in community as companions in the Lord and their life of prayer flow from this initial gift of God. But these three things, their call, their community life, their prayer

are gifts not only for themselves but to be shared and in the sharing they may and do find others more richly endowed than themselves. The contemplative core of their vocation is the most valuable gift they have to communicate — most obvious in the contemplative communities, but as a *sine qua non* of any religious community. It has emerged that this is appreciated in the church and outside it.

Recommendation

The value of religious life needs to be affirmed strongly by the bishops of this country, and the importance of preaching on the evangelical virtues, mentioned in the Constitution on Religious Life from Vatican II (paragraph 2h) was underlined. (A minority of the group was not so sure that this official affirmation was as necessary as that which is given by ordinary working and partnership.)

Religious men and women have something to say to the Church and to society as a whole today:

- (a) as witnesses to God's unchanging love in forming a loving community,
- (b) in prayerfulness of life,
- (c) in openness to the changing needs of church and society in their consecration and life-long commitment.

Religious need to be encouraged and affirmed by the support of their bishops, priests and others — not so much for what they do, but for the quality of their life of dedication.

Much of the self-examination of religious in this group has led to conclusions which are useful but which concern their own organisation and better collaboration among themselves. The group had much to say about the relationship of religious with bishops, clergy and the laity.

Recommendation

The group request the hierarchy to continue the process of implementing the recommendations of the Holy See contained in the Directive, *Mutuae Relationes*. They find a particular urgency in the need to implement the detailed suggestions contained in paragraph 54 of *Mutuae Relationes* concerning the appointment of Vicars for Religious and of female and male consultants.

It is difficult to express the feeling, strongly held, that while religious do not see themselves as beings set apart from the rest of humanity or the church, they do appreciate the gifts they have been privileged to receive — the gift of prayer, of loving community, of freedom to respond to needs in church and society as a whole. These are privileges to share, to a greater or lesser degree, according to circumstances. Association with the laity was seen as a partnership in which each would be giver and receiver. If religious have the particular gift of community life in which all are striving to be 'companions in the Lord' the laity would be valuable commentators on the modern interpretation of the life of the vows. Opportunity for religious and laity to come together allows both to realise that under those two names are human beings, essentially equal and meant to collaborate in the building of the kingdom.

The role of religious in the modern world is based on the gospel, on the mission of Jesus himself, and on the needs of society. Can anyone be so omniscient or simplistic as to believe that they know what society's needs are? Two possible answers were seen. Every document dealing with religious life since the Second Vatican Council reminded religious of their special calling to the poor and marginalised. But with this goes the fact that at the level of decision making, in politics, economics and other fields, the spiritual dimension is usually lacking, and should not religious be prepared to enter this world too? Some members of the group were strongly convinced of this. Among the traditional works of religious, the importance of formal education and of adult religious education was stressed. The fact that much of the work done in the past by religious is now done by others, either by natural development or because of a decline in the number of religious, was not seen as a disaster; it meant that religious were free to go where they were needed, and it led to a more rapid development in lay/religious collaboration, even to the level of sharing community life.

Recommendations from the floor

1. The spiritual riches of the contemplative orders and their capacity to give as well as to receive should be recognised and enjoyed by the rest of the church and society.
2. This sector requests the superiors of all religious orders of women and men to examine the specific ways in which they could contribute their expertise and skills to the continuous formation of lay Catholics for all their forms of ministry.
3. Religious orders should be encouraged to share their lives more fully in order to create greater understanding of the religious life.

All the recommendations in this report were passed by large majorities in the topic meeting.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. No counts were necessary.

SECTOR B — TOPIC 4

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY

Chairman: Dr Denys Turner

We set out to define the minimum but essential priorities for a pastoral strategy relevant to the apostolate of the laity. But in the course of our discussion we were so impressed by what we identified as a radical failure of vision in the Church's practice that we were forced back to fundamentals. We sought to define the nature of the lay apostolate in relation to the whole mission of the Church but in particular we tried to identify what is distinctive about our ministry. We asked what is it that Christ, through the Gospels and the Second Vatican Council, is saying to us about our specific role and also what in practice our local churches appear to be demanding of us. We have to say that we are not satisfied that the two always amount to the same thing.

We fully endorse the teachings of the Council's Constitution on the Church, particularly in its bearing on the lay role. But this endorsement is no longer enough. We wish to emphasise most strongly that the teaching of the Constitution on the Church is not generally understood within our Church and after 15 years has scarcely at all been implemented. We regard it as imperative that the teaching of that Constitution be sincerely and uniformly implemented and that its implementation should be closely checked. For our Church is not, and is not seen to be, the Church which the Second Vatican Council describes. It must become so urgently, and we consider below some aspects of that renewal of the Church which seem to us to be the most important.

As far as concerns the laity we understand the Council to have said that we are the people of God, a community of service to the people of our neighbourhood and nation. We acknowledge that each of us, by virtue of our baptism, has a share in all the rights and duties of the whole people of God. But more particularly we have rights and duties which are special to us as lay people and they derive from our specific forms of

the apostolate. For us that apostolate is not primarily another formal ministry within the Church. Rather it is a calling which demands that we carry the redemptive work of Christ with us into the world so as to renew it. For this reason we realise that ours is an apostolate which is either carried out by us or else is not carried out at all. We recognise, furthermore, that this ministry is the unique responsibility of each of us, each in his or her own way, according to our secular status, in our families, neighbourhood, work and social responsibilities. Specific as it may be, this apostolate will be effective only when the whole Church commits itself to mission: for ours is now a missionary territory.

We are aware that the gospels call each one of us to a life of growth in personal prayer and holiness, and no separation can be made between this personal call to holiness and our calling to be apostles in our daily lives. But, though the Gospels and the Council are unequivocal about this calling, we do not in practice see the Church calling us in a manner which makes such clear-cut apostolic demands on us. If we are called, then someone must call us. But when we examined what is usually asked of us, for example, in parish life, we formed the impression that though by no means always, far too often the clergy would rather have us as willing sheep in the administration of our parishes — if that — than as apostolic leaders in the world.

We think it is important that the voice of the laity be listened to far more attentively within the Church than it is at present. In particular, two matters concerned us all. First, too many clergy are dragging their feet over consultation within the parishes. We believe that it ought to be the declared policy of the national hierarchy that there should be formal, permanent and effective means of consultation with the laity in every parish, deanery and diocese as well as nationally. Secondly, we urge the hierarchy to listen to and to trust our own distinctive insights and experience when they are drawing up statements and directives on the many social and moral issues which form so central a part of our apostolic programme. They should not say that they do trust us in fact until they are seen to do so. For trust is a shared relationship in friendship and is constitutive of the Church.

Though we regard the presence of a lay voice in the Church as being of great importance we think it more important to put this aspect of our apostolate in context. We do not wish to encroach upon the responsibilities of those with ecclesial ministries. On the contrary, the value of our apostolate in the Church derives from our unique experience of being the Church in the world. This experience must not be lost to the Church.

Constantly in our discussions we were brought up against the harsh facts of our own general failure to realise our calling to the apostolate

in the world. We found almost as worrying the failure of the Church as a whole to understand and provide for it. For the most part we confined ourselves to the sources of our own apathy and came to the following conclusions:

- (1) Not enough is asked of us, or, when it is, frequently the wrong sort of challenge is offered. We do not all want to become minor ecclesiastical administrators. When it seems that that is all the Church wants of us, many resist the clericalisation of their role and their distinctive talents for service are left unexploited by the Church.
- (2) Though some of us do, by no means all of us want to join organisations of the lay apostolate. We deeply appreciate their value to us, but primarily we want to feel called upon as individuals, doing what we are doing, but witnessing to Christ in our daily lives. For us, every single act of our lives is capable of bringing Christ to our fellow men and women. But rarely are we taught this. In our apostolate we are all equals, whatever our talents. But the Church does not seek out the diversity of our talents. Ultimately the scale of our abilities is of no final importance. The Church gives little evidence of believing this in practice. Hence the image and the reality of the Church is deformed. For ours is not a meritocratic apostolate, though it sometimes seems to us that only the articulate and well-spoken are expected to give anything of value.
- (3) We accept that we lack formation for our lay role. In fact we believe that this deficiency is at the root of our failure to realise the Council's teaching. Consequently, in any pastoral strategy for the lay apostolate the highest priority must be given to the development of existing means and the creation of new means of formation appropriate to the specific needs of the laity, of all ages, social classes, occupations and talents. Because the need is permanent so the effort must be permanent and structured. It must be adequately funded and manned, even at the cost of a substantial reallocation of resources. And the means must be available to all. Therefore this formation must be available in every parish and deanery and diocese. Specifically:
 - (a) we need formation in lay spirituality. Our lives must be lives of prayer, but we are not monks. We need trained counsellors (who need not be priests) if we are to make our lives fully prayerful. Sermons are not enough, even at best, and for most of us they barely touch the surface of our concerns;
 - (b) if the liturgy is to be genuinely formative it will need more lay involvement and planning. If the eucharist is to be, as it should, the centre of reference for us, it must be allowed to speak to

our condition. Practically, there is no reason why lay people should not be asked to preach more often and good reasons why they should;

- (c) we need training in a great variety of apostolic and pastoral skills, for example in counselling, community care, spiritual guidance, theology, leadership and perhaps above all we need continuing programmes in marriage guidance, not just perfunctory pre-marriage counselling;
- (d) we were much concerned about the formation of youth for adult life. There is much criticism of the state of religious education in schools. The young must not be given a choice between a soft-centred teaching of pastoral and social concern without reference to solid doctrine and purely formal doctrine without reference to pastoral and social concern. The young people among us stressed the need they experience for a formation of commitment, focussing on the sacrament of confirmation, which should be given in mid to late adolescence. For their part parents need more dialogue with the religious education teachers. Many felt that they do not understand what is being taught or how or why. Such dialogue could itself teach the parents much.

Once again, however, we have to acknowledge our own apathy. Many such means of formation are available now and are under-used. Perhaps this is for the reason that too little is being asked of us. Within the narrow focus of a clericalised lay role small need for formation is perceived. In any case we have to begin with ourselves. Much of our formation is unstructurable and derives from our own initiatives, for example in the small parish discussion, bible-study and prayer groups. But, to be effective such groups must be our own and the clergy must trust them, which we believe they have not always done. We must emphasise, we are not the people in the Church who have no vocation. Ours is the basic vocation of service and love in the world. The ordained ministers are servants of that service. Too many clergy exercise authority as if it were a form of mastery over, and containment of, lay initiative. We do not exaggerate when we say that the level of frustration among the laity, though impossible to quantify, is intolerably high. If the laity need formation in their apostolate, so do the clergy in their service to that apostolate, which must be a service of trust, friendship and equality. We need that trust and friendship because we are often fearful of the demands of our own vocation. So finally we ask for co-operation and trust between all the ministries in the Church. For that trustful communication alone can guarantee the unity of all the ministries within the common mission of the people of God.

Resolutions

1. The teaching of the Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council is not generally understood within our Church and even after 15 years has scarcely at all been implemented. It is imperative that the teaching of that Constitution be sincerely and uniformly implemented and that its implementation be closely checked.
2. It ought to be the declared policy of the Bishops' Conference that there should be formal, permanent and effective means of consultation with the laity in every parish, deanery and diocese as well as nationally.
3. We urge the Bishops' Conference to make use of the means of consultation in order to listen to, and trust, distinctively lay insights and experience when they are drawing up statements and directions on the many social and moral issues which form so central a part of the lay apostolic programme.
4. The co-operation of our bishops is asked for in fostering in the Church a free communication and trust between all its ministries.
5. In any pastoral strategy for the lay apostolate the highest priority must be given to the development of existing means and the creation of new means of formation appropriate to all the diversity of the specific needs of the laity of all ages. Because the need is permanent the effort of formation must be permanent and structured. It must be adequately funded and manned, even at the cost of a substantial reallocation of resources. And the means must be made available to all. Therefore this formation must be available in every parish, deanery and diocese. In this respect:
 - (a) Young people need formation for commitment, focussing on the sacrament of confirmation, which should be conferred in mid to late adolescence.
 - (b) Diocesan formation councils should be formed to co-ordinate formation programmes in co-operation with retreat houses and pastoral centres and other centres and agencies of formation.

These recommendations were passed by large majorities in the topic meeting.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendation contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. No counts were necessary.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Chairperson: Mrs Monica Comerford

The Gospels and the Second Vatican Council, plus more recent detailed statements from the 1974 Synod of Bishops and Pope Paul's address to the International Women's Year, make it quite clear that women and men are equal and both should have the opportunity to offer their distinctive gifts in the service of the Church and the world to build up the kingdom of God. All are agreed that there is an imbalance as the Church is led, organised and largely planned by celibate men. Though condemned by *Gaudium et spes*, there is still obvious discrimination against women in the Church — which, while itself preaching freedom and justice, has a clear duty to set its own house in order.

Women have so much to offer to the total Church — their gifts and abilities are rarely being used at the national, diocesan and parish levels, particularly in planning and decision making. Many priests fail to use the variety of skills which women can offer.

Women are an integral part of the laity, not shadow men. But it does appear that they do need definite encouragement, e.g., discrimination in their favour until the effects of years of adverse cultural conditioning which has limited their role are eliminated. Single women and nuns suffer from the same difficulties of being in many cases assigned fixed or inferior roles by the Church authorities and by laymen at the parish level. We feel that the work of women in religious orders in particular has not been given due recognition in the Church.

The whole question of human relationships between men and women concerns us, and we feel that from childhood women are conditioned to adopt these roles. We are concerned about the training of priests, as we feel that many of the difficulties stem from their inability to relate honestly and openly to women as people. It is felt that a large number of priests would be more open to lay partnership, and the gifts of women particularly, if continuing education were a normal part of priestly life.

We live in a rapidly changing world and there is a great need for the total church to listen, reflect and adapt to new needs and new situations. The Second Vatican Council gave us the ideals, but the Church's normal structures at all levels do not favour a partnership or shared vision of responsibility and so tensions have arisen ever since the Council on how to carry out these new ideals at the local level. To adopt a gospel

image, it seems to have been a case of new wine in old wineskins. Now we feel we need some new wineskins if the old ones are not to burst and the precious new wine be lost.

Recommendations

EDUCATION

1. We recommend that the ability of women to play a full role in the Church should be fully recognised and assisted by a policy of continuing religious adult education in parishes, deaneries and dioceses, using existing colleges of education and seminaries so that priests and lay people may study together. Such training should include that of interpersonal skills and group leadership, also community building. This would help priests to work with and communicate with women more easily.
2. The changed attitudes called for by the Second Vatican Council and subsequent statements should be fostered from childhood upwards, particularly in Catholic schools, in order to avoid the trap of role-assignment or acceptance by women. Both girls and boys should be prepared for an active and varied service to the Church and the wider community.

ADMINISTRATION

3. We recommend that parishes in suitable areas be organised on a team basis which would include lay parish assistants as well as parish sisters working with priests to promote such areas as adult formation, catechetics visiting, and to act as catalysts for real community building, and in particular to develop the ministry and potential of laywomen.
4. We also recommend that the establishment of some form of parish council open to both men and women should now be mandatory in every parish.

WORSHIP

5. Girls and women should be involved in, and commissioned for, all ministries now open to lay people, such as reader, acolyte, and special ministers of the eucharist.

6. We ask the bishops to continue to press for girls and women to be allowed to act as altar servers (as takes place already in many countries).
7. We recommend the wider use of women as liturgy animators locally and on diocesan bodies.

GENERAL

8. We ask the bishops on their parish visitations to enquire closely as to the ways in which lay women are involved in all levels of the life and mission of the local parish.
9. We ask that diocesan commissions on the Christian family might be set up to supplement the work of the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council. They should be concerned with family policy and special needs such as those of one parent families, the handicapped or elderly people.
10. It is recommended (if this has not already been done) that married people should attend as 'periti' at the forthcoming synod on marriage and the family, as it is they who have the practical experience.
11. We propose that women should be admitted to the permanent diaconate as there is considerable scriptural and historical support for this step.

Carried: 38 for, 26 against, 3 abstained.

12. We ask that there should be continued study and consideration of the nature of priesthood to see if in time it might be possible for women to share in this great vocation. We need to explore more fully the model of priesthood down the ages to see if it is the only one possible, and whether it ignores the feminine gifts and potential for leadership in the Christian community.

Carried: 30 for, 21 against, 3 abstained.

(We ask the bishops to note that the majority of members of our topic group desired the eventual admission of women to the priesthood. In particular two areas of urgent need were mentioned: (a) that of women religious and secular institutes whose way of life requires the availability of a priest; (b) women religious who are chaplains or parish workers and are seriously impeded in their work by being

unable to celebrate the eucharist in the groups with which they are working, and are also unable to absolve those whom they serve.)

Except where figures are given all these proposals were carried with substantial majorities in the topic meeting.

This report was accepted by the sector. All the recommendations contained in the report were passed by large or overwhelming majorities in the sector meeting. No counts were taken except on recommendations 11 and 12. Both of these were carried with over 200 voting in favour.

B. — THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

MINISTRY, VOCATION, APOSTOLATE

1. OUR baptism gives us both the right and the duty to participate in the various ministries of the Church. We recognise the unique role of ordained ministers with regard to sacrament and word, but we believe that all other responsibilities should be shared fully with all the people of God, and shared rather than delegated.
2. In following Christ who is our Way, priests and laity need to realise their ministry in an evangelical way — a life of simplicity, poverty, openness and availability to all men and women in imitation of Christ, the suffering servant. 'Cry the Gospel with your whole life' (Charles de Foucauld).
3. Rooted in Christ, we are set free to live and work together in a loving, confident partnership which excludes all elements of mistrust, fear or discrimination. We become liberated, willing to take risks and to innovate, daring all things for Christ. With such an openness of heart and mind we become members of a Church on the move, a Church living and growing, serving sensitively and wholeheartedly the world of our own time, a Church giving unequivocal witness to the Gospel, as envisaged by Vatican II.
4. We have had an experience of such a Church in action here in Liverpool this week. But is this the image of the Church we have seen as we took stock of ourselves during these days of the Pastoral Congress? The answer is 'No'. Each one of us recognises the need for a personal conversion of the heart, so radical as to require a change of lifestyle, of attitudes and structures. Celebrating the eucharist together in memory of Christ (and as he commanded) we came each day to our work of examining those areas of the Church's life assigned to us, with humility, with openness and with love. And this is what we find and recommend:

ORDAINED MINISTRIES

5. To be a father of his people a bishop should be able to communicate easily with them all, priests and laity, as preacher of the Gospel and as teacher, particularly of all that Vatican II recommends, translated into the context of England and Wales. To achieve this quality of relationship between a bishop and his people we must have many smaller dioceses. In communicating with his people each bishop should inform them fully of his dialogue with Rome, and in a similar manner the Conference of Bishops should so inform the nation's Catholics. We would also wish to suggest to bishops and to priests that they consider carefully the length of time they can best serve a diocese or parish, as bishop or as parish priest.
6. The priest should be free to pray, to celebrate the sacraments well and to preach. Mindful of the spiritual needs of his parishioners he should foster the development of prayer-groups and house Masses in his parish, both of which enable priest and people to listen and to talk to each other.
7. We see it as a top priority that every priest should accept regular inservice training and spiritual renewal as a normal part of his priestly life. So highly do we rate this need that it leads most of us to accept that some parishes might even be deprived of Sunday Mass at these times. Where teams of lay people, sisters, deacons and priests could operate more effectively than one priest working alone in a parish, we urge that this be done.
8. The inestimable value of celibacy was unanimously accepted, but we ask that careful consideration be given to the question whether it be God's will that married men should at this time be called to the priesthood. A more detailed exploration of the possibility of admitting women to the ordained ministries was also felt to be necessary. It was urged that particular attention be given to fostering the personal and spiritual maturity of those to be ordained.
9. In considering the diaconate we felt the need for the Church in England and Wales to be led to a clearer understanding of this ministry and to the way in which it operates in our countries. Lay ministries should not be stifled by establishing the ministry of deacons.
10. In general the delegates were looking for more positive encouragement and energetic leadership from bishops and from priests.

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY

11. Our countries are now seen as mission territories. The Church has to commit itself to this mission and the laity should be fully involved in it. As the lay role is specifically *in* the world, it has a distinctiveness of its own guaranteed by baptism, not delegated. Bishops and priests are asked to place more trust in lay initiatives.
12. Ordained ministers should see themselves as servants of the lay-service of the world. It was felt that too many clergy use authority not as a service but to contain lay initiative. Free and confident communication and trust between all ministries is needed but, sadly, is frequently absent in the Church's life.
13. The laity freely acknowledge that they are failing in their specifically secular apostolate. They are aware that their initiatives do not need organisation but that their formation does. The present means available to them are not sufficient. A positive change of priorities involving considerations of personnel and of finance are urgently required to provide permanent and structured means of lay formation at every level and for all age groups, but particularly for youth and recent school-leavers.
14. The laity do not fear the challenges of the apostolate, but they need formation, and they need to be trusted. Suggestions for lay formation gave a high priority to programmes of spiritual renewal and to practical re-training appropriate to a rapidly changing society. Greater use should be made of the adult education system, diocesan centres and study groups in the process of shared learning and exploration.
15. To provide a better service for the Church's mission it was recommended that at parish level 'Care Councils' be established which could concentrate on the identification of needs, service-giving and social activities, as for example the support of minorities, ethnic groups, the unemployed and the disabled. There was strong support for an ecumenical approach in meeting social needs. Such services should not be confined within administrative boundaries. They are the living expression of Christ's love, operating through the worship, teaching and service of the people of God.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

16. When the delegates were considering the role of Religious they felt that the values inherent in religious life should be more effectively

communicated to the local Church. Methods of achieving this should be urgently explored. The spiritual riches of the contemplative orders and their capacity to give and to receive needed to be recognised and engaged by the whole Church.

17. The value of religious life should be affirmed by bishops and in the ordinary course of preaching and teaching in the Church. Bishops are also asked to implement the Holy See's recommendations in the directive *Mutuae relationes* concerning the appointment of Vicars for Religious, who should be supported by female and male consultants.
18. Religious themselves should share their life more fully with lay people. Superiors of orders of women and of men are asked to examine the specific ways they could contribute their expertise and skills to the continuing formation of the laity for all forms of ministry.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

19. Consideration of the role of women gave cause for much unease. There is so manifestly an imbalance in favour of men that they are often unable to utilise their particular skills in the service of the Church and the wider world. If everyone is to play his or her full part in the ministry of the people of God to all the world some definite changes in attitudes and structures are needed.
20. We hope that nationally and at diocesan level women and men will be involved together in planning and decision-making. At parish level priests, religious, lay women and lay men should form teams, working together to meet the needs of the local Church. The request for women's admission to the permanent diaconate was again firmly made. The question of the eventual ordination of women was raised in this context, with a plea that the matter be explored seriously at this time.
21. The delegates noted sadly that immigrants and coloured people were almost entirely unrepresented in their Sector, and felt this to be a reflection on their own lack of involvement with the total Church in their areas.
22. Throughout the days of prayer and reflection the delegates were motivated by a desire to realise *their* responsibilities as the people of God, and to exercise the variety of gifts which are given by one and the same Spirit.

SECTOR C

Sector C was the largest sector with 360 delegates. Topics 1, 2 and 3 had 6 groups and topics 4 and 5 had 7. This sector followed the general pattern of the set timetable but departed from it on the first day by having brief topic meetings in the late afternoon.

The procedure followed in the topic varied slightly. In the preliminary topic meeting on the Saturday afternoon, the group leaders reported back from each group. Group leaders then drew up reports at the end of the first day which were circulated in the groups the next morning. The topic chairmen each formulated agendas from the topic meeting (for topic 4 this was a draft report) which were circulated to the groups, then considered at the topic meeting and voted upon or modified. In topics 1, 4 and 5 the aim was to arrive at consensus. In topics 2 and 3 the expression of the report was aimed at satisfying the various shades of opinion rather than seeking consensus. This finalising of the topic reports continued on the Monday morning.

At the sector meeting, a strict procedure was followed. Each topic report was read by the chairman and 10 minutes' comment from the floor allowed. Delegates were asked not to speak on their own topic. Then each recommendation or group of recommendations was read again and voted upon. Voting was by show of hands and a count was taken on every vote even where a majority was clear. Only votes in favour were counted since the purpose of voting was to assess the weight of support for the recommendations and not to appear to either accept or reject particular recommendations. Votes against or abstaining were not counted. Voting figures are given in the text. There were a number of minority opinions and recommendations from the floor, which in some cases have been incorporated into the topic reports. Topic chairmen were the judges of whether the weight of support for a particular minority opinion justified including it in the topic report.

EDUCATING FOR MARRIAGE

Chairman: Fr Vin Nichols

I. EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHURCH

In order to develop care and respect within the Church, and to present marriage as a vocation equal in importance to the religious life we propose that:

1. the local Church celebrate the goodness and beauty of married life as the human expression of God's love in prayer, sermons, anniversary Masses and a cycle of Mass themes drawn from married life;
2. the local Church develop the life of its families through adult groups for discussion and learning, reflecting in faith on life-experience and providing broad education, e.g., health education and parent skills;
3. the local Church call on married couples to be the main source of practical care to those in need and for preparation of the approaching marriage;
4. the local Church pay particular attention to involving non-Catholic partners in prayer, worship and activity. They are part of the witness to God's love in marriage, and part of the richness of each parish.

The particular problems facing mixed marriages must be studied by the Church.

The parish is the seed bed of family life and the main support of parents as the first educators of their children;

5. the Church must discover ways of listening to the experience of married people, especially their understanding of the meaning and implications of a permanent sexual relationship. This experience is vital for a coherent and developed teaching on marriage which will speak to people of our day, and must be shared in an atmosphere of care and non-judgemental acceptance.

II. EDUCATING SOCIETY

The Church must constantly educate society, including its own members, to respect the fundamental value of life, permanent marriage and parenthood. We propose that the bishops and the body of the Church speak out for those conditions within which family life can flourish:

(i) *Housing*

adequate family housing, including the extended family, with appropriate mortgage facilities and development of housing associations.

(ii) *Finance*

that tax and allowance systems give most support to the family, especially for young mothers and young families.

(iii) *Employment*

by encouraging flexi-time and other policies regarding job transfer to minimise damage to family life and to attend to the effect of unemployment on the family.

A national working party must study these issues (Note 1) and make recommendations to the bishops so that these questions become an accepted part of the Church's teaching on marriage. The Church must co-operate here with other groups of similar convictions.

(iv) The Church must call for as much public finance for service research and education in natural family planning as that given to artificial methods of birth control. The Church must call for respect for pregnancy and parenthood in the Health Service so that people are not pressurised towards abortion and sterilization.

(v) The Church must support and develop the use of the media to promote the positive aspect of married life through joint Christian ventures commissioning and sponsoring plays and productions in TV and radio. The experience of happy marriage and the holiness it brings must be explored with people of other faiths and presented powerfully to the public.

III. EDUCATING THE INDIVIDUAL

Educating a person for marriage begins at birth and is continuous throughout life. It is primarily the responsibility of parents; their influence, and that of the local community, cannot be overstated.

A. Schools play an important part. We propose:

1. that all Catholic schools, by their administration, timetable, staffing and discipline endeavour to create a caring Christian atmosphere;

2. that schools develop open and respectful relationships with parents, involving them fully in the life of the school;
3. that, with the help of married people and outside bodies, they positively prepare pupils for life and marriage (Note 2);
4. that training for life-relationships should be based on the principle that the educator starts from whatever stage of development young people are at, and the relationships they are at present engaged in. These experiences must be reflected on together, in the light of faith, bearing in mind especially the child with unsettled family background;
5. that Colleges of Education explicitly prepare teachers to explore with pupils their experience of relationships, to help them acquire necessary skills, and to find Christ in their daily lives;
6. that this training for marriage and life be encouraged in non-Catholic school by our word and example (Note 3);
7. that the parish supplement the work of schools, especially with weekends, days etc. designed to help young people in their understanding of relationships. The diocesan youth service should play an important role in this.

B. Preparing the engaged couple.

(1) Diocesan organisation.

- (i) A diocesan co-ordinator (male or female) must be appointed to develop all aspects of the ministry to marriage and family.
- (ii) Each deanery must establish a team for marriage and family life, and from these teams a diocesan committee should be formed to assist the diocesan co-ordinator and be part of a diocesan pastoral council.
- (iii) The deanery team should be responsible for ensuring adequate preparation of all couples approaching marriage, calling on the many agencies at work in this field, and seeking to include married people and people of other religious groups.
- (iv) The deanery team should include married people and wherever possible a person who has experienced marital breakdown (Note 4).

- (v) The deanery team will organise training and support for those people willing to help prepare couples for marriage.
- (vi) A national commission for marriage and family life should be established.

(2) Diocesan policy

We propose that every diocese establish a policy which makes it clear that the firm expectation of the Church is that each couple approaching marriage shall:

- (a) give four months' notice of their marriage (Note 5);
- (b) agree to take part in preparation for marriage in a manner that is fitting to their needs (Note 6).

We propose that in certain exceptional cases, the local bishop will defer an intended marriage, and the local Catholic community will offer the couple the support or counselling they need, and continue that support for as long as necessary.

(3) The work of preparation.

It is not possible to create a single pack or course for engaged couples, as differences of class and culture are so important. Certain basic points can be made.

We propose that courses to prepare engaged couples should:

- (i) be carried on, as far as possible, at local level, according to local conditions;
- (ii) centre on developing the relationship between the couple, helping them to reflect on it in faith;
- (iii) aim at putting the engaged couple in touch with married couples so that
 - (a) they can be encouraged by their example;
 - (b) they can receive continued support after marriage (Note 7);
- (iv) present to the engaged couple a clear and full understanding of the Church's developing teaching on responsible parenthood and family planning, and how it is to be applied in particular circumstances. Also the couple must be offered clear instructions on the various methods of family planning and their implications, so that they can eventually make a clear and informed choice (Notes 8 + 9).

The overall aim of preparation for marriage must be to inspire a young couple with a vision of the beauty of their calling and how by the quality of their lives they can bear witness in their local community to the love of God for all men.

With the exceptions noted all these proposals were fully supported by the topic group.

At the sector meeting, the recommendations were voted upon in blocks. Each block of recommendations was accepted unanimously with only one exception. (See Note 5.)

Note 1: At sector level a call was made for careful study of the role of women in family life and society today, as an important part of general education for marriage.

This received widespread approval.

Note 2: At sector level it was stated that education for personal relationships, and sex education should not be left to the discretion of the head-teacher, but should be known as part of the bishops' policy for all Catholic schools.

This received full approval.

Note 3: At sector level a call was made that the bishops speak clearly to Education Authorities and the Department of Education and Science about the quality of education in personal relationships and sex education in state schools, especially as many values contrary to Christian principles are promoted, often in a hidden manner.

Note 4: At topic level another version of this was put forward viz.: the deanery team must include married people and may co-opt a person who has experienced marital breakdown.

At first there was an almost equal vote for this and the presented proposal but after further discussion a substantial majority supported the proposal, i.e., 'the deanery team must include married people and wherever possible a person who has experienced marital breakdown'.

At sector level, in confusion over procedure, opinion seemed to be almost equally divided.

Note 5: At topic level, a small minority wished for these policy proposals to be compulsory.

At sector level there was a minority (about one third) in favour of a compulsory policy.

Note 6: At topic level there was a suggestion, supported by a small minority, that betrothal be explored as a setting for marriage preparation and for its celebration in the Church community.

Note 7: A comment has been received from four delegates about the need to give special attention to preparing couples where both partners are not believing Christians.

Note 8: At topic level a small minority opposed the call to give information on the various methods of birth control. A stronger sentence was requested by six people, as follows: 'the couple should be made aware of the hazards of artificial methods of birth control, and how those artificial methods, by acting directly or by implication as possible abortifacients, destroy the sanctity of human life and are not acceptable to Catholic teaching.'

Note 9: A submission at topic level: 'The Church must emphasise again that doctors, nurses and health visitors within its ranks give a clear lead in the field of natural family planning in the context of training for marriage and marriage itself'. Dr Nicholson. Supported by approximately 12 people but with the assent of others in the topic group.

SECTOR C — TOPIC 2

GROWTH IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Chairman: Professor Paul Black

1. GROWTH IN MARRIAGE

Marriage must be seen as a complex relationship, changing profoundly from first love, through absorption in young children, absorption in jobs and careers, the stresses of adolescent independence, to the more isolated couple in old age.

In order that a couple can adapt and grow together they need:

- (a) the presence of Christ in the marriage; an awareness that marriage is a special vocation from God;
- (b) vibrant sexual attraction, coupled with mutual love and respect, in which they teach one another to give;

- (c) ability to adjust to changing needs, which needs time spent in real communication together;
- (d) links outside themselves for support;
- (e) a clear aim, ideal, goal for their marriage.

The concept of growth in relationship is essential to the theological and pastoral development for marriage.

[Voting: for 346 (100% of the sector)].

2. RENEWED THEOLOGY

A renewed theology of marriage as covenant must do justice to the fulness of the growing relationship, to the need for mutual communication, to sex as a positive means of giving and communicating, to the way in which the couple reveal and teach Christ to one another, to the essential role of the sacraments of matrimony and eucharist in marriage.

The renewed theology will give couples a clear aim for all stages of the marriage, and must be stated so that all can understand it and can relate it to their own experience.

It should pay special attention to those in mixed marriages, for the Church must give hope and support for their spiritual growth.

A renewed positive theology of marriage as covenant, covering all aspects of the marriage relationship has to be worked out and clearly stated.

[Voting: for 342 (99% of the sector)].

3. LITURGY AND MARRIAGE

Parish liturgy must support and express the work of married couples more actively. The parish should rejoice at a wedding and be there at a baptism. Special masses for the married and special feast-day or other celebrations can contribute, and the role of the sacraments in the couple's relationship needs emphasis. Preaching must speak more directly to married couples.

Mixed marriages need special attention. When both partners are Christians, some form of inter-communion would be of very great value; if this cannot be done, then celebration or renewal services for the married ought to be non-eucharistic so that the large and growing proportion of mixed couples is not excluded.

The liturgy must be developed to express and serve the spiritual life of married couples and families.

[Voting: for 342 (99% of the sector)].

4. (i) PARISH SUPPORT FOR FAMILY LIFE

This must be based on appreciation of needs as follows:

- (a) In the first years
 - first pregnancy and first child can cause anxiety.
 - intensive demands of small children cause stress.
 - a child will change and can threaten a couple's relationship.
 - sexual relationships need adjustment.
- (b) With grown adolescent children
 - husbands can be immersed in their jobs.
 - adolescents' need for independence causes tension.
 - women can feel threatened or inferior.
 - birth regulation may be desirable.
- (c) When children have gone
 - wives can feel useless.
 - men may be unemployed or retired and become aimless.

Support for growth is needed especially in stage (a) because problems here can stunt the future. In (b) the parish can provide ways in which adolescents and parents can reassess their relations to one another through outside contacts, and adolescents can be helped to understand their sexuality.

In (b) and (c) parishes should provide activities in which families and couples can work together as part of a caring community.

4. (ii) CLERGY AND LAITY

Priests' parish work should have a stronger family emphasis, with more sensitivity to the needs of families, perhaps more emphasis on visits to homes. Priests and laity must try to build together a community which visibly cares for family life.

The parish must have a community strategy to meet the needs of families at all stages, and clergy and laity must work together to support marriage.

[Voting: for 345 (100% of the sector)].

5. SINGLE AND CHILDLESS PEOPLE

The childless often feel their marriage may be meaningless. A theology emphasising growth in relationship could help them, and liturgical and community life should then assign to them a distinctive role.

The unmarried should be recognised as having a special vocation and opportunities. Ways can be found of relating them to family life and of using their resources to help families so that they have an important role in a wider community of love.

People with special needs must not be forgotten.

[Voting: for 345 (100% of the sector)].

6. THE ROLE OF SEXUALITY IN MARRIAGE

We ought to stress that intercourse can be a life-giving act between the couple even when, as on the vast majority of occasions, it does not produce a new human life. It is life-giving because it is a communication, a recurrent act of prayer and of thanksgiving for mutual love. It can also be an act of hope for the future and an act of reconciliation and forgiveness. It is also an act in which the couple confirm one another's identity as man and woman, a central sustaining and healing element in the relationship through which the couple make Christ present, one to another.

The Church ought to develop positive teaching on sexuality in marriage.

[Voting: for 334 (97% of the sector)].

7. BACKGROUND TO STATEMENTS ON CONTRACEPTION

It should be clear that the discussion on contraception which follows is made in the context of the following assumptions:

- (a) married couples should have a responsible attitude to the size of their families;

- (b) we are concerned here with couples who wish to live a full Christian marriage in which they unselfishly try to be faithful to the needs of their partner, children, Church and society;
- (c) the discussion is only concerned with methods of contraception which do not involve abortion.

8. THE SITUATION

Many Catholics do not understand the distinction between artificial and natural methods of contraception. Others understand the factual basis but cannot understand and/or cannot accept the moral basis for the distinction.

A large proportion of Mass-going Catholics disagree with the present teaching on contraception. Some do so because they do not understand the teaching, some because of ignorance of natural methods or because of experience of failure with them whilst some cannot accept the arguments on which the teaching is based.

The disagreements or rejections are more widespread amongst young people.

There is widespread lack of understanding and widespread disagreement amongst Catholics, about the present teaching on contraception.

[Voting: for 322 (93% of the sector)].

9. THE IMPLICATIONS

- (a) The pastoral situation is confusing. Contraception is forbidden in principle, but many seem to be able to practise it on grounds of conscience, and this confuses others. To many, the teaching appears to say that certain acts are wrong, but that you can go ahead if your conscience is clear. Advice about the primacy of conscience should be given more consistently, clearly and simply, in the light of the general teaching on the nature of sin and of individual responsibility.
- (b) Some priests are unable or unwilling to discuss the issue. Some clergy are confused by the very problems that confuse the laity, and have a difficult task in giving advice, sometimes because of conflicts of loyalty and authority. Married couples must play a greater part in the training of priests so they can be in direct contact with their Christian experience of marriage.

- (c) Some laity can accept the present teaching. For the many who do not, some have a crisis of conscience, which leads them to leave the sacraments because they believe they are in serious sin. Others still receive but feel unease, whilst others have a clear conscience about rejecting the teaching. Young people tend to be less concerned about their disagreement but for them the credibility of the Church may be damaged.
- (d) Development of the teaching of the Church on sexuality in marriage is hindered because of the confusion and disagreement on contraception.

Wider and more open discussion is difficult because many Catholics cannot openly discuss their position with regard to sexual relationships because of unease about contraception and because of natural reticence.

The Church's teaching on marriage is at an impasse because of confusion, uncertainty and disagreement over contraception, which affects the whole sacramental life of many Catholics.

[Voting: for 281 (81% of the sector)].

- *10. (a) The Church's teaching on marriage can only develop through a fundamental re-examination of the teaching on marriage, on sexuality and on contraception.

[Voting: for 299 (87% of the sector)].

- (b) Such re-examination should leave open the possibility of change and development in the Church's teaching on marriage, on sexuality and on contraception.

[Voting: for 238 (69% of the sector)].

- (c) Indeed there is now a need for development in this teaching.

[Voting: for 242 (70% of the sector)].

- (d) Indeed, there is now a need for change and development in this teaching.

[Voting: for 135 (39% of the sector)].

- *11. Catholics should have absolute trust in God's provision for whatever children he sends. Where circumstances force them to risk no further children, then abstention from intercourse can lead to personal growth and happiness.

[Voting: for 55 (16% of the sector)].

12. Whatever re-appraisals take place in the future, there is an urgent need for the Church to devote resources to research and dissemination
- (a) on natural means of family planning;
 - (b) on the difficulties and needs, both psychological, sexual and spiritual, of married couples.

[Voting: for 345 (100% of the sector)].

* The resolutions in section 10 and 11 were designed as a graded set so that the sector could explore the degree of support for various positions, with each resolution put separately, for consideration independently of the other resolutions. Only votes in support were called for and counted.

Note on topic voting C2-5.

No topic voting details are given for these topics. All the recommendations were accepted by the groups and the sector votes are recorded.

SECTOR C — TOPIC 3

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

Chairman: Mr Kevin Muir

It is necessary, first of all, to indicate the scale of the problem we are discussing. At least one marriage in four is likely to end in separation and divorce. The effect of this on the hundreds of thousands of rejected spouses and of children deprived of a parent is enormous. First of all for the individuals concerned and secondly for a society as a whole. It cannot be anything but harmful for society to have so many hurt and disappointed people in its midst.

The fact that Catholic families are just as much at risk also strikes at the very basis of the Church as a sign of the love which unites all people with God and with each other.

NEEDS OF SPOUSES/PARENTS

As a first step, we need to ensure that our parishes are so organised that newcomers are recognised and made welcome, that all members are kept in close touch with what goes on and that there is a network of groups ready to respond to a wide variety of needs. In particular, parishes should:

- ★ increase the awareness among members of the existence and needs of single parents: for example by inviting outside speakers to address the Sunday congregation;
- ★ identify single parent families in the area. The schools can be a big help in this; so too can health visitors;
- ★ have someone with some status and expertise to make the first approach, e.g., a parish sister or a deacon;
- ★ develop a comprehensive programme of support and care, such as providing care for children during holidays and times of sickness;
- ★ group single parents for mutual support (but making sure that they are also included in larger social functions) and help them develop a spirituality appropriate to their status;
- ★ be aware of other agencies which are ready to offer practical help and have working relationships with them.

(Voting: for 350.)

ADDITIONAL NEEDS OF SINGLE PARENTS WHOSE MARRIAGES HAVE BROKEN DOWN

These spouses are filled with a sense of failure, of hurt, rejection and they need to be helped to be able to forgive and to regain hope. They may need to be reassured that separation and divorce (without remarriage) does not debar them from the sacraments.

We recommend that the bishops authorise a study of the experience gained by the Association of Separated and Divorced Catholics in the United States, to see if it would be wise to encourage similar groupings in this country.

(Voting: for 264.)

NEEDS OF CHILDREN

The departure of a parent robs children of the chance to experience normal growth in understanding of marriage and family life and sows the seeds of possible breakdown of their marriages. It is important, therefore, that they are given expert, continuous and personal care, as well as being drawn into the life and activities of neighbouring families. The diocesan rescue societies could help in training local full-time and part-time voluntary workers.

OTHER AGENCIES

Bodies such as the National Association for Single Parent Families have built up a great deal of knowledge and skill in aiding families with practical needs. We would recommend that the Church at all levels continues to support and collaborate with them.

(Voting: for 333.)

RE-MARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE

In order to assist these marriages experiencing difficulties and to lessen the risk of breakdown, we recommend the following preventative measures:

- ★ better sex education in home and school, in liaison with the parents;
- ★ increased emphasis on preparation for marriage;
- ★ a review of the Church's teaching on sexual ethics;
- ★ use of the liturgy, e.g., renewal of marriage vows;
- ★ family prayer;
- ★ closer collaboration between the parishes and the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, Marriage Encounter and other family organisations.

(Voting: for 343.)

The following statements/recommendations are put forward for adoption. They are based on our consideration of sections of the diocesan preparatory reports:

ADMISSION TO THE SACRAMENTS OF DIVORCED AND RE-MARRIED PEOPLE

1. Congress asks the bishops to re-affirm the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of Christian marriage and stress the importance of the need for the growth of the relationship. At the same time they should look at ways of showing compassion to those whose marriages have broken down irreconcilably, whose second marriage is a living witness to Christ and who seek to re-establish unity with the Church through the eucharist.

(Voting: for 273.)

2. (a) This Congress upholds the indissolubility of marriage as being a symbol of Christ's undivided love for his Church.
- (b) We recognise the need for compassion for divorced Catholics in irregular unions, and urge that they be encouraged to play as full a part in the life of the Church short of receiving the sacraments

We ask such couples to accept this, humbly, as a cross to bear in the sure knowledge that God, who is the only true Judge, will give them their reward in due time. In this way, they, too, are giving witness to the indissolubility of marriage and, therefore, of Christ's love for his Church.

(Voting: for 36.)

3. At present the Church implicitly recognises two types of marriage, (a) the sacramental marriage and (b) a marriage relationship which is potentially invalid because some factor or factors are present which could later give rise to an annulment. No one would suggest that a couple in the latter situation are living in a permanent state of sin. We suggest that the Church should now consider explicitly acknowledging that two types of marriage can exist by authorising its priests to act as registrars for non-sacramental marriages, and differentiating between the two by reserving nuptial Mass for the sacramental marriage.

(Voting: for 8.)

Alternatively we would like the Church to examine the possibility of remarriage in the Church, taking account of the solutions found in other Christian Churches, particularly the Orthodox Church.

(Voting: for 125.)

MIXED MARRIAGES

4. We recommend:

- (a) proper preparation, if possible inter-faith, requiring increasing communication between the local churches;
- (b) encouragement of ceremonies in which ministers of both denominations are involved: to be held usually in the parish of the bride;
- (c) we see that the question of inter-communion is fraught with difficulty but we strongly support the continuation of the dialogue between the churches in a caring manner.

(Voting: for 297.)

5. Non-contraceptive intercourse is the ideal for which everyone should strive. The group recognises that for many different reasons married couples may fall short of this ideal. Some may fail to attain the ideal for reasons which they are to blame for, others may find the ideal impossible to attain. Moral guidance offered by the clergy should conform to this statement of principle. In this way much of the confusion and unhappiness felt by Catholics could be overcome.

(Voting: for 52.)

6. This Congress upholds the teaching of the Church on contraception, recognising married love as being both 'love-giving' and 'life-giving', and urges the bishops to do all in their power to promote natural family planning as a means of living up to the Christian view of marriage.

(Voting: for 155.)

Recommendation from the floor

'I would like to support the request that lots of information is available through schools, parishes and every available outlet about the natural methods of family planning. (This means planning babies as well as avoiding them.) It's time the Church brought this into the permissible subjects for open discussion'.

(Voting: for 320.)

Note on topic voting C2-5.

No topic voting details are given for these topics. All the recommendations were accepted by the group and the sector votes are recorded.

SECTOR C — TOPIC 4

YOUNG PEOPLE

Chairperson: Miss Paula Medd

The enthusiasm and spontaneity of young people is recognised by the whole topic group as one of the Church's greatest assets which can stimulate growth in the life of the Church and assist in carrying out its mission. It is, however, also recognised that for most young people

Christ is not a real person and his teachings do not touch their lives. To the committed and uncommitted alike many of the Church's teachings have no relevance in their lives, and they lack good basic teaching in the faith in a language they can understand. Each parish community is asked to recognise the potential of its young people, to provide properly for their spiritual growth and development and to give them every help and encouragement to be missionaries to their fellow young people.

Serious concern was expressed by all seven discussion groups within the topic about Catholic schools. The value of having them was fully endorsed but there was an urgent call for them to recognise their true function as centres of faith and for the teaching of religious education to be carried out by properly qualified, committed Catholics and for the syllabus to include doctrine, the Church's teachings on moral matters, scripture and liturgy and for opportunities to be given for retreats and a variety of spiritual experiences.

The involvement of young people in all aspects of parish and general Church life is vital and positive structures and opportunities should be provided for this to happen in all places. Many young people are already involved and doing tremendous work, but many more are not and need to be drawn in. Young people should be part of the whole and not seen as a separate section of the Church.

Priority Recommendations

We would first like to make two general recommendations which we consider are priorities:

1. a national strategy for service to young people should be formulated urgently to ensure adequate provision for formation and involvement of young people within parishes, deaneries and dioceses, and this should be backed up with the provision of personnel and resources;
2. those working with and for young people should be properly trained and provision should be made for this training.

(Voting: for 354.)

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATION IN CHRIST

We see the formation of young people as the responsibility of the whole community and not just that of the priest.

It is essential that young people have the opportunity to experience Christ within the Church through prayer, worship, work, learning and caring, in a way which is relevant to their lives, and that they have a definite and positive programme to assist their formation at every stage of life.

While it is recognised that Catholic schools should not be expected to shoulder the full responsibility for growth in faith, every school should be a community of faith and for this to be a reality, trained personnel who are fully committed to formation are vital.

Young people in non-Catholic schools and those who have left school are equally important and the parish community has the awesome responsibility of providing for their growth in faith with trained and committed personnel.

It was brought out clearly that many young people in the Church have moral standards concerned with sexual morality which differ from those of older people. Some are becoming estranged from the Church because of this. It is vital to provide real opportunities for dialogue with these young people, to listen to them and to explain the Church's teaching.

All groups considered the preparation of young people for marriage to be generally inadequate and they called for a review of how preparation is being carried out. (As another topic group was dealing specifically with this subject, discussion was limited.)

Further Recommendations

3. Time must be given to developing a parish and deanery policy to include:
 - (a) a full programme of formation for all young people at all stages in their growth, including those at work, those in tertiary education and those in non-Catholic schools, to be implemented by trained personnel within the parish, deanery and schools. Catechesis should take place in terms that relate to young people's experience and language;
 - (b) with adequate co-ordination between those responsible in parish and school;
 - (c) opportunities for experiencing living faith through specialised small groups relating to the needs of individuals, through open-ended groups, weekend retreats, etc.;

4. Trained paid deanery and diocesan youth workers should be appointed who would work within parishes and schools and would be backed up by deanery or diocesan residential centres.
5. Voluntary youth workers should be trained to work in parishes and commissioned for this special mission.
6. Priests should be appointed to work full time for young people at diocesan and deanery level and others part-time at parish level to provide the vital personal contact with young people. These priests must all be adequately trained.

(Voting: for 348.)

7. In Catholic schools staff need regularly to review the aims and objectives of their school and to honestly assess their success in their work of spiritual formation. Senior staff and management should have the support of diocesan in-service training to study the problems and possible methods involved in fostering a truly Christian spirit in every aspect of school life. Trained religious education specialists, a full-time chaplain (priest or religious or lay as necessary) plus a staff, enthusiastically and individually committed to the apostolate of Christian formation are all essential for the success of every Catholic school. A national religious education syllabus would facilitate much needed liaison between school, home and parish.

(Voting: for 357.)

8. Careful consideration should be given to the whole matter of confirmation and the teaching of the theology of confirmation. In doing so, account should be taken of the desire of the majority of people in the group who want the age at which confirmation is administered to be raised to one nearer the time of leaving school.

(Voting: for 331.)

INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PARISH

The parish is seen as the natural unit in which growth in faith of the people takes place. For growth to happen a person must be involved in the community and his talents recognised and used. There must be a climate of genuine interest and joy in Christ.

Among young people in the Church today there is a sense of rejection by older people and a lack of confidence in their own ability to contribute. There is an urgent need in all parishes to recognise the role of young people and to provide opportunities for them to play a real part in parish life according to their abilities.

Further Recommendations

9. Every parish is asked to provide positive encouragement and structures for young people to take a realistic part in the decision-making, work, liturgy and activities of the parish.
 10. Opportunities should be provided in all parishes for young people to grow through involvement in small groups, special liturgies and retreats.
 11. The whole involvement of priests and bishops with young people should be seen as a major priority, and a positive policy of contact should be made to ensure that young people regularly see their priests and bishops, especially at a time when they are leaving school.
 12. Positive support and encouragement should be given to national organisations already working with young people and efforts should be made to make them widely known.
- (Voting: for 354.)

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There are some groups of young people who have very special needs because of their particular situations and there is a special need for a caring Church to make special provisions to reach out to these. Particular concern was expressed for young people who are isolated and lonely, the homeless, those with no family homes, the handicapped, those in the forces, young married people, young workers, immigrants, those who are unemployed and unemployable. A particular plea was made, and endorsed by the whole topic group, for children who are in care and those who are in the period after care. Finally, concern was also felt for those who have a particular personal problem because of relationship difficulties, drug addiction or alcoholism.

Further Recommendations

13. Positive pastoral plans must be made to contact and meet the needs of isolated young people in parishes and deaneries. The provision of adequate properly trained counselling/advisory personnel to be freely available to help young people with problems. There is an urgency for all parishes to look at the needs of unemployed young people, young workers, and those unemployable and find ways of helping them in a practical way. A careful and detailed look at the situation regarding homeless young people should be made by the Church and resources found to meet properly their needs.

The bishop of the forces is asked to initiate a special study of the specific needs of young people in the armed forces. Religious communities working in areas of special need among the young should be supported and encouraged. Others should be encouraged to use their resources for this work.

14. Every possible support should be given to Catholic child welfare societies and, in the absence of fostering, children should be placed in small family units in parishes. The parish community should be made aware of their direct responsibility to these young people. Parish support should be given to young people leaving care, to involve them in parish life and help them in every possible way.

(Voting: for 354.)

APOSTOLATE OF THE YOUNG TO THE YOUNG

Young people have an important mission to other young people who are uncommitted or apathetic or have been deaf to the message of Christ. Many are very enthusiastic to carry out this mission but lack the necessary knowledge and training. It is vital that they are helped to realise their mission and provided with the help, encouragement and training needed.

Recommendations

15. A pastoral strategy should be formulated which involves the reaching out to the uncommitted through priests, youth workers and young apostles. Adequate training facilities should be made available to provide for the mission of 'like to like'.
16. Apostolic organisations working with young people should be given every support and encouragement.

(Voting: for 351.)

At sector level, votes were taken on groups of recommendations. The figures given therefore refer to all the preceding recommendations and statements.

Note on topic voting C2-5.

No topic voting details are given for these topics. All the recommendations were accepted by the groups and the sector votes are recorded.

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Chairman: Mr Nicholas Coote

INTRODUCTION

People who are 'different' come to be labelled according to their particular characteristics: the elderly, the handicapped, the deaf, homosexuals, the lonely. Labelling ensures that they are distanced from us, marked off by special considerations and special needs. Society is ill at ease with imperfection, deformity, incurability, lack of what it deems success or normality; and in the Church we can share this attitude, adding to it a sense of deformity as a blight from God, an evil, something remotely connected with sin.

Contrary to this is faith in the crucifixion, the deforming mangling of Christ who thus entered into glory. By facing suffering, deformation, diminution, weakness and marginalisations, the Church is challenged with a potential of Jesus' humiliation, to be reintegrated into the fulness of life in the Church, in society. The Church must place such people at its centre, not at the periphery, so as to reveal them, make them known and thereby grow in its own understanding of death and resurrection, weakness and strength.

Although state policies have recommended that integration is to be encouraged it may be that only the Church has the mission to do this in real depth since it has a unique understanding of, and role among, disadvantaged people. To carry out this mission an immense work of attitude changng within the Church is necessary. A general principle is working with rather than for people.

GENERAL

1. Church authorities at all levels should divert substantial resources of manpower, buildings and money into more explicit support for the caring family, and for groups with special needs whose numbers are steadily increasing. Especially now that school rolls are declining, this might include alternative or multi-purpose use of school buildings.

(Voting: for 356.)

2. Particular use of resources is commended in:

- (a) a renewed effort to make available Church land for sheltered and other special housing through the housing association machinery;
- (b) the building of hospices and places where people may die in peace and dignity, with the same application we once put into building good schools;
- (c) we invite Church bodies, religious congregations and others who own appropriate buildings, to examine their present use and to see whether there can be a mutually agreeable transfer for use for people with special needs;
- (d) the making available of resources to provide short-term regular-respite accommodation; and also some long-term provision which is still necessary; both to be of appropriate size and at reasonably local level.

3. In using its resources the Church should be aware of, and make use of, the skills of professional people working in the field of social welfare, who would be available to help and advise on a voluntary level. The Church should be careful not to duplicate statutory or other voluntary services. In providing care, the Church at local level should not fail to act ecumenically, on pain of failing to show the full sign of Christian care.

(Voting: for 355.)

4. The topic group expressed disquiet over and drew attention to, the effects of cuts in the public statutory services and benefits system. The effects were particularly damaging to some of those with special needs and most vulnerable.

Without appearing to condone or approve cuts in public expenditure the Church at local community level must be prepared to step in to do what becomes immediately necessary.

5. Attention should be given at local level to the establishment of links between the community and the institutions for mentally ill people, mentally handicapped people and others deemed to be in need of special institutional care. Pastoral care should extend to human and social needs for contact, decent living conditions, and, if necessary, advocacy.

6. The primary obligation for care is upon the family, and the supporting local community in a general sense. But there is need for more systematic or particular activities. The achievements of the societies traditionally associated with special needs should be recognised,

built on and extended. There is a need to avoid the waste caused by failure to cross parish or other boundaries, or by concentration on one particular group of people in need, to the exclusion of others. Support, recruitment of volunteers, training and co-ordinating activities are necessary at some level; where appropriate this might be at diocesan level, or deanery level, or even more local still.

At some level it will certainly be necessary to provide full-time and paid co-ordinators. All of this should not overlook the fact that basic skills are available in the parish, and that many needs are relatively simply satisfied.

(Voting: for 355.)

7. With regard to elderly people:

- (a) The local church community should accept a responsibility for the care of elderly people of all denominations or none, in its area. This means providing elderly people with the opportunity for giving as well as receiving, for taking risks rather than being stifled in safety, for preserving choice and dignity.
- (b) Beyond this, the accompanying host of spiritual, mental, social and physical needs often accompanying old age requires resources, actions and servicing at a wider level. Accordingly the Church at every level (parish, deanery and diocese) is called upon to make explicit provision for elderly people commensurate with local needs.
- (c) Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the difficulties of old age are not merely personal or psychological, but are substantially affected by low income, inadequate or inappropriate housing, immobility, etc.
- (d) It is recommended that the governors and heads of Catholic secondary schools should encourage regular joint activities by their pupils and elderly people.
- (e) Spiritual ministry to elderly people should advert to loss of faith and fear of death, as well as ensuring access to the sacraments for housebound and institutional people.
- (f) Further, more detailed guidance should be made available on the subject of euthanasia; there is still considerable misunderstanding about the word itself, about current practice and about the extent of the Church's teaching.

(Voting: for 356.)

8. With regard to mental illness:

The topic group pointed out the very large numbers involved, and wished to re-affirm the right of mentally ill people to be accepted as full members of the Church, in the face of the fear and prejudice, and the consequent neglect to which they have been subjected within the Church.

We welcome the re-ordering of the sacraments of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick; but this superficial treatment does not uncover to people the richness of these sacraments as means of understanding, receiving and celebrating the wholeness that Christ's healing gives to the whole body of Christ.

The bishops are asked to appoint a working party to re-examine the role of the Church in the care of mentally ill people.

(Voting: for 351.)

9. With regard to handicap (physical, mental and sensory):

- (a) 'An urgent call is made for a renewed clarification on access to the sacraments, particularly the eucharist, penance and marriage. Mentally handicapped people should be allowed to grow in faith.
- (b) A directory of pastoral care of handicapped people should be provided by the bishops which should include attention to special catechetical formation where appropriate.
- (c) Guidance is needed on certain moral problems including compulsory sterilisation, abortion and sexuality.
- (d) A Christian approach to prevention of handicap should include attention to violence in families where children might be disabled before or after birth.
- (e) Counselling services should be available to help:
 - (i) parents of handicapped newly-born children;
 - (ii) those suffering a traumatic handicapping injury.
- (f) Access to church buildings needs to be established universally. For deaf and partially hearing people there are technical aids which should be made available in Church buildings.
- (g) The Church must urge effective protection and rights of handicapped people in employment.

(Voting: for 342.)

10. In considering attitudes towards homosexual people the group recommends the pamphlet published by the Social Welfare Commission, *Pastoral Care of Homosexual People*. This ought to be studied very widely, in view of the lack of understanding, prejudice and discrimination against this hitherto voiceless minority group.

(Voting: for 342.)

11. With regard to special pastorates:

(a) TRAVELLING PEOPLE (Gypsies, tinkers)

- (i) In view of the scattered nature of the work and the need for a proper catechetical and pastoral care, the bishops are requested to support the work especially in endeavouring to procure more full-time workers.
- (ii) A booklet giving guidelines for clergy in their pastoral dealings with travelling people should be sponsored by the bishops and issued to every parish.

(Voting: for 311.)

(b) SEAFARERS

- (i) This topic endorsed the request by the Apostleship of the Sea, in conjunction with non-Catholic seafarers' organisations, to the Government to implement the 1978 Convention on standards of training, certification and watch-keeping for seafarers, adopted in 1978, by the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation.
- (ii) This group requests that the bishops of England and Wales carefully select and have appropriately trained priests who will be involved in the work of the Apostleship of the Sea.
- (iii) This topic group requests that the bishops of England and Wales give serious consideration to implementing a positive mission to seafarers at their place of work, i.e., at sea, to be undertaken by the lay apostolate; and that priests and people, especially in port parishes, be encouraged to support this work.
- (iv) At the same time effective support should be given to the families of seafarers.
- (v) Pastoral care of an appropriate nature should be devoted to the spiritual welfare of oil rig workers.

(Voting: for 334.)

(c) IMMIGRANT GROUPS

Greater understanding should be shown by parish clergy of the work, problems and different cultural traditions of those specially appointed priests who are commissioned to work for immigrant groups. It is re-affirmed that the ultimate aim is integration in the host community but without loss of identity. This requires time and understanding. This affects various immigrant groups with their own pastorate (for instance, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Ukrainian and West Indian groups).

The implications of living in a multi-racial society should be basic to seminary training.

(Voting: for 334.)

12. In conclusion the value of the preparation for the Congress is affirmed and recommended steps to ensure some continuous process include

- (a) the continued meeting of groups in parishes, deaneries and diocese to discuss recommendations and plan future action.
- (b) the Bishops' Conference is requested to establish at least a Continuation Committee.

(Voting: for 334.)

MINORITY APPENDIX

In the context of the spiritual needs of the elderly, the following proposition was discussed and voted on in the discussion group.

'That this Congress, in a spirit of obedience, request the Bishops' Conference to petition Rome for the restoration of the Tridentine Rite of the Mass, as an approved option alongside other rites.

We realise the difficulties created by those who have used the Tridentine Mass as a symbol of disobedience. However, we are also aware of others, particularly the elderly, who experience real spiritual deprivation as a consequence of losing this link with believed traditions and the Catholic upbringing of their childhood'.

This was proposed by myself, Agnes Rutherford; voting was four in favour, five against, two abstentions.

The proposition was read at the topic meeting, but not voted on, and a more general motion referring to the availability for the elderly of oppor-

tunities for participation in more traditional forms of worship produced several inconclusive votes. The topic then decisively voted against any addition to the report as it stands at present.

I would like to submit my original motion as a minority report with the following comments.

It cannot be disguised that many elderly people are among those most distressed by the liturgical changes and, in particular, the suspension of the old rite of Mass, and are also, in many cases, those least able to avail themselves of the few opportunities at present existing to attend Mass in this rite.

In charity to them, even if for no other reason, I believe that the Church should make recourse to this rite available on a far wider basis than at present.

Otherwise our claims to be a caring Church have a hollow ring as a large area of hidden distress will continue to be ignored.

Signed: Agnes Rutherford, Leeds Diocese.

(Certified as properly submitted, accurate in its account of voting, and produced by the above signatory.) N. H. N. Coote (topic chairman).

Note on topic voting C2-5.

No topic voting details are given for these topics. All the recommendations were accepted by the groups and the sector votes are recorded.

C. — MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

1. THE statements put forward by Sector C on marriage and family life, young people and individuals with special needs illustrate extreme concern. This comes firstly from an awareness of present urgent needs. Secondly from a wish to redress the sufferings of those, who while honestly striving to effect God's will, feel a sense of rejection by the Church.

EDUCATION FOR MARRIAGE

2. Education for marriage should be related to three distinct areas — the Church, society and the individual. The local Church must look to its own education. It should seek ways in which it can express the goodness, beauty and spirituality of married life in its prayer and liturgy. It should explore ways of involving non-Catholic partners in worship and full parish life. It should listen to the experience of married people and appreciate their unique insights into what is contained within a permanent sexual relationship.
3. Society needs educating about the fundamental value of permanency in marriage, and of parenthood and family life. Acknowledgement of such values must then have implications for policies on family housing, finance and employment. A working party is called for to study these areas and assist bishops so that such matters become an accepted part of the Church's teaching on marriage.
4. Individuals, too, must be educated concerning marriage and family. This process must be started in childhood by parents and continue in schools and parishes linked as Christian communities. Since the understanding of relationships is of great importance, ways in which this might be fostered were examined.
5. The sector asks for a national policy which should establish the expectation that four months' notice before marriage should be given

so that a programme of preparation might be possible. This should centre on developing the relationship of the couple and should aim to present a clear view of the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood and the planning of families. Further, it should indicate how married couples bear witness to Christ and express clearly the notion of married spirituality.

GROWTH IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

6. As growth in marriage was considered more deeply, the sector called for a development of the Church's theological and pastoral thinking. This would start from the complex reality of marriage, which is a relationship that changes profoundly throughout a couple's life together. A renewed positive theology must do full justice to all aspects of this relationship.
7. The needs of families must be carefully considered, by priests, religious and laity working together. Liturgy must provide for the spiritual life of families and action at parish level must embrace a wide number of other needs. The special contribution of the single and of childless couples should be constantly remembered.
8. On contraception, delegates first stressed that they were not talking about methods involving abortion, and that they were concerned with couples who strove to develop a Christ-centred marriage, unselfishly and responsibly.
9. It was strongly felt that the starting point was the need for a positive teaching on sexuality — teaching which stressed that intercourse can be a life-giving act between a married couple, even when, as on the vast majority of occasions, it does not produce a new human life. It is an act which can sustain and heal the relationship by which a married couple make Christ present to one another.
10. A large majority agreed that there is widespread lack of understanding and disagreement amongst Catholics on contraception, and that this hinders both the development of the Church's teaching and the sacramental life of many Catholics. They called for a fundamental re-examination of the teaching on marriage, sexuality and contraception. A majority felt that such re-examination should leave open the possibility of change and development in the Church's teaching. A substantial minority were prepared to go further and say that there is now a need for change and development. A request for the Church

to give resources to permit work on natural family planning and on the psychological, sexual and spiritual needs of the married received unanimous support.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

11. On marriage breakdown, delegates were mindful that one marriage in three was likely to end in separation and divorce. Hundreds of thousands of rejected spouses and deprived children, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, stand in need of comfort and care.
12. Parishes must organise themselves to respond to the situation. A network to welcome newcomers, to discover needs, and provide appropriate help is essential. Parishioners must be made aware of what the single parent families in their midst need. Such families must be identified — schools can help in this. Help must be offered with discretion — perhaps through a parish sister or deacon who specialises in this work. The parent needs friendship and practical help. The children of single parents need experience of normal family life.
13. Partners of a broken marriage experience a sense of failure, hurt and rejection. They need reassurance, encouragement and acceptance. The sector recommends that the bishops authorise the study of the experience gained by the Association of Separated and Divorced Catholics in the USA. There are those who are divorced and have re-married and long to share completely in the sacramental life and mission of the Church. We ask the bishops to consider with compassion their desire to re-establish unity with the Church through the sacraments.

YOUNG PEOPLE

14. The enthusiasm and spontaneity and hope of the young is a gift to the Church. Yet, sadly, many young people feel alienated from the Church because they do not see its relevance to their lives. They have rejected the institutional Church, not through conviction but through incomprehension. What has too often been presented has been a set of moral imperatives that say little about Christ and his Good News, and its relevance to their own particular life style and concerns. It is vital that we enter into real dialogue with the young, listen to them and help them to reflect on their own lives in the light of the Gospel. There was a call for a national strategy for service to young people to be backed up with provision of properly trained personnel and services.

15. Young people who have left school and those in non-Catholic schools need proper provision for their continuing formation as Christians.
16. Catholic schools should be communities of faith. For this it is vital to have trained personnel committed to the formation of young people, and chaplains. In-service training should be provided for staff and management to reflect on their role, study problems and find ways of making their schools centres of Christian life.
17. Guidelines are needed for parents, parish and school, to work together in the formation of young people. Catechesis should take place in terms that relate to young peoples' experience and language.
18. The sacrament of confirmation needs re-consideration. Its theology needs presenting anew. The majority of the sector want confirmation to occur near the time for leaving school.
19. The whole community must recognise the potential contribution young people can make to the life of the Church. Every parish must provide opportunities, structures and positive encouragement so that young people may take a realistic part in the decision-making and work and liturgy of the parish, through participation in prayer — and other small groups. Opportunities for growth should be constantly available.

The involvement of priests and bishops with young people was seen as a major priority, to enable them to come to an understanding of one another.

20. Many young people have special needs. A study of the particular needs of the young people in the Forces should be initiated by the Bishop to the Forces. The special needs of the single, homeless, the unemployed and unemployable must also be our concern, however difficult the problems may seem.

Positive pastoral plans should be made in every diocese to investigate the requirements of these special groups and ways of reaching out to provide for them in very practical terms. Special recommendations were made that the Church provide for young people in care and those leaving care.

The message of Christ must be taken to all young people. The role that committed young Christians can play in this was recognised. Adequate training facilities must be made available to provide for the mission of the young to the young.

21. It was recognised that many young people in the Church have moral standards — especially in sexual matters — which differ

from older members of the Church, and some are alienated from the community because of this. Real opportunities must be provided for the Church to enter into dialogue with these young people, to listen to them and explain the Church's teaching.

SPECIAL GROUPS

22. To carry out its mission through and with people with special needs, the Church needs to undergo an immense process of attitude change.
23. Church authorities are required at all levels to divert substantial resources into more explicit support for the caring family and for the steadily increasing number of people with special needs.

These resource changes should include:

- the multi-purpose use of school buildings;
 - the use of Church land for sheltered and other special housing;
 - the building of hospices with the same effort that was applied to schools in the past;
 - a mutually agreed transfer of appropriate buildings of Church bodies, religious congregations and others for use for people with special needs;
 - short-term respite facilities together with some long-term provision, both to serve local requirements.
24. Economy of effort implies:
 - using voluntary effort and skilled professionals;
 - liaison with statutory and voluntary bodies, avoiding duplication of effort;
 - an ecumenical approach to solving problems should be followed;
 - liaison across boundaries and client groups.

The needs include:

- emergency action where public services are inadequate because of public spending cuts;
- links between institutions and local community;
- more back-up for informed family and local network by traditional societies;
- full time, paid, co-ordinators at some levels.

25. Elderly People. (The aim here is to enable rather than disable).

The local Church community should accept responsibility for care of elderly people of all beliefs in its area.

An explicit resource provision should be made at local level commensurate with local needs.

Attention should be paid to geriatric units and hospitals, potentially neglected.

Spiritual needs of elderly people should be understood and met. Further teaching on the implications of euthanasia is required.

Mental Illness

26. The sacraments of healing, reconciliation and the anointing of the sick, were felt to be celebrated in a way that was unsatisfactory and did not fully allow individuals to feel their healing power.
27. Guidance is needed on ministering to the spiritual needs of mentally handicapped people, particularly so that their reception of the sacraments of the eucharist, penance and marriage might be facilitated. A number of moral dilemmas concerning the mentally handicapped continued to require examination.

Physical and Sensory Handicap

28. Communication here is vital and a directory of pastoral care is required. Access to church buildings should be universal.
29. Protection of employment rights needs attention. Counselling must be sustained.

Homosexual People

30. Study of the principles contained in *Pastoral Care of Homosexual People* (published by The Social Welfare Commission) is recommended in view of past and prevailing prejudices and discrimination.

Special Pastorates

31. Support of the pastorate to seafarers and their families is requested. The spiritual needs of oil-rig workers must be considered.

Travelling People

32. Support of this pastorate by bishops is requested. A recommendation is that they should sponsor a *Pastoral Guidelines* booklet for parish clergy.

Immigrant Groups

33. Attention is drawn to the need for tolerance and understanding. Parish clergy need to be sensitive to the difficult work of chaplains concerned.

Consultation to continue

34. The hope was expressed that the process of consultation, dialogue and discussion which had begun in parishes, deaneries and dioceses in preparation for the Congress would continue. There was a need to discuss recommendations and plan action. The bishops were urged to establish a Continuation Committee, which would be responsible for this.

SECTOR D

Sector D was the smallest sector with 250 delegates. Topic 1 was large, with eight groups. Topics 2 and 3, with five and four groups respectively, met together at topic level and produced a joint report. Topic 4 had five groups.

This sector departed from the timetable set down in several ways. The time allowed for meeting in small groups was extended on Sunday afternoon so that the topic meeting did not begin until late that day and continued until midday on the Monday morning. Consequently the time allowed for the sector meeting was limited.

At the topic meetings on the Sunday, the group reports were assessed. The topic chairmen then drew up overnight draft topic reports which consisted of a preamble plus recommendations. These were presented to the topic meetings, debated and voted upon. Amendments were also considered and voted upon. Recommendations were voted upon individually at both topic and sector meetings except in cases where by agreement, a block of recommendations was voted upon. The voting in the sector meeting was recorded as either unanimous or a substantial majority. Counts were taken when considerable division was apparent.

At the topic meeting of topic 1, the group reports were considered and used as well as the draft topic report.

SECTOR D — TOPIC 1

EVANGELISATION AT HOME, THE WORK OF CONVERSION

Chairperson: Miss Maggie Pickup

I. THE GOOD NEWS

We are convinced that the Good News does transform our lives and can transform the lives of those around us. We are convinced that the Good News speaks of Jesus Christ, God and man, who died and rose from the dead and so conquered sin and death and opened to mankind the way to eternal life.

We take upon ourselves the task of evangelisation in England and Wales in the name of Jesus Christ, conscious that it is only by his grace we will ever succeed.

As the Church we have a mission which is to live in witness to the gospel values which make life possible. Man is looking for a deeper meaning to his existence. He needs a hope for the future, to know that his liberation does not end with death. We acknowledge that the quality of our Christian community life is the source of our evangelisation. The basic law governing our relationships is the law of Christ's love — this is what marks us out and identifies us for one another and for the world.

II. PERSONAL RENEWAL

We have recognised the need to be constantly renewed ourselves through word, sacrament and relationship. At the heart of our evangelisation is commitment; commitment to the love of God and to the values of the gospel, which we must live as individuals and as a community. Prayer and liturgy are vital areas of renewal for us. We should seek all possible means to lead each person to be converted to Christ by an act of personal allegiance. In this personal commitment we ratify the sacraments of Christian initiation, baptism, confirmation and the eucharist. We need to open ourselves in expectant faith to the action of the Holy Spirit and to his gifts so that we may be faithful to our supernatural calling as a unique part of the body of Christ.

Our prayer is the wellspring of our missionary activity; the call to renewal must be directed outwards from ourselves to mission, to witness, to evangelisation. We regret that too often our faith has been a private affair and that we have not taken sufficient note of the vast majority of people — the uncommitted. We hope our mission to renew ourselves will lead to a more outward-looking strategy of evangelisation.

We must begin to see that our Christian faith is often directed to those in need. We need to recognise that evangelisation is done from our inadequacy; evangelisation is one beggar telling another beggar where he can find bread and in any case sharing what he has with him. We need to recognise that a majority in the Church is not evangelised. We need to undergo personal conversion, in heart and mind. This is a work of the Spirit.

We recommend the following:

1. We ask the bishops to make a regular call to prayer and renewal in all dioceses.

2. We ask the bishops to re-affirm the necessity of regular private prayer in the life of every Catholic and that the bishops encourage the clergy to provide more frequent opportunities for prayer and devotion, e.g., meditative Holy Hours and popular devotions.
3. We wish to acknowledge all forms of renewal in their work for evangelisation. We ask the bishops to give serious thought to these movements as powerful forces for evangelisation.

III. OUR FORMATION AND APPROACHES TO EVANGELISATION

Our own evangelisation must also proceed with a growing awareness of the gospel. We ourselves often fail to be able to express and live the gospel because we have not been able to make it part of our lives, our family lives our work lives, our lives in our neighbourhood.

Without a real conversion of heart and mind to the person of Jesus Christ, making ourselves completely over to him, our efforts will really be human efforts and far from bearing fruit could present an obstacle to God's work. Vital liturgies, adult formation courses and any other activity will have no effect unless those involved have given themselves completely to Christ.

We are called to proclaim the gospel to those who are outside the Church, to the uncommitted, to those of other faiths. We must treat their views with respect and attempt to open up a dialogue with them. We need to meet people where they are and begin our mission from their needs and their questions. We must not erect barriers that prevent love and reconciliation. Often the Good News is unintelligible to contemporary man. We cannot make our Good News intelligible by substituting one set of words for another, we must make a commitment to the poor, the needy in Jesus' name. We must be seen rather to be living the Good News, the life of Christ, which we profess to believe. Our gospel is impoverished by our failure to reach out, respond to and hear those who are in need.

Adult Christian formation must include within it the development of small groups as communities of personal renewal and evangelisation. The parish structure often leads to anonymity, lack of real lay involvement, a failure to bring to liturgy the vital life of the gospel due to its isolation from the work and activity of groups and individuals. We need to rediscover the link between Mass and mission, between worship and way of life. A parish whose heartbeat consists of small communities engaged in the task of evangelisation must come alive in its liturgy. Groups directly involved in caring and evangelisation bring their experience to the liturgy enriching it and enriching understanding of the Good News.

We see the building up of community in this reciprocal relationship between evangelisation and liturgy. The liturgy itself is the source of evangelisation and the dialogue between living witness and living liturgy based on the full involvement of small communities, lay or religious, should remove the stigma of the dead, lifeless celebrations of which the lapsed and the half-hearted are so critical. The development of small communities, the greater lay involvement in evangelisation and liturgy requires that close attention is paid to the development of lay ministry.

It is vital that priests and laity work together and have a dialogue with each other if evangelisation and liturgy are to be the unity that is our vision.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

4. We request a clear statement from the bishops on the need for Catholics to equip themselves to state clearly and intelligibly to the unbeliever the gospel message that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose that we might live; and also that it is a prime duty of Catholics to do all in their power to proclaim the message to the unbeliever.
5. The mass media seems to be a largely unexplored area in regard to proclaiming the gospel to the uncommitted and could be a resource for evangelisation. We recommend that as a Church we seek out and make more use of opportunities available in television, radio and press.
6. We believe adult formation to be such a priority that the Church should channel a high proportion of resources into the employment of personnel in this field. We recommend that every effort be made to prepare lay people for their mission in life of evangelisation and that finance and personnel be made available for this.
We recommend that every diocese have a central adult education team to ensure the provision of resource people for giving courses, and also diocesan organisers for small groups.
7. We ask the bishops:
 - (a) to encourage the establishment of regular summer schools, which would take place in seminaries, in scripture and theological study for lay people;
 - (b) to place great emphasis in priestly training on the study of the history and theory of prayer as well as on its practice;
 - (c) to take steps to ensure that in schools scripture and religious knowledge should be taught to all pupils to the same level as

secular subjects; in particular, applicants for Catholic teacher training colleges should be carefully screened.

8. We recommend as means of evangelisation house groups, bible study groups, prayer groups, apostolic groups, young couples groups, family days, retreats/mission and frequent opportunities of liturgy for married couples with renewal of marriage vows.
9. We recommend that more positive support in terms of personnel and finance be given to Family and Social Action, Catholic Marriage Advisory Centres and Marriage Encounter, to enable them to form lay people and subsidise weekend training programmes for them.
We recommend that a strategy be devised by the bishops which will establish them and other groups as the basis of local Christian community, united in the eucharist. The parish could then be seen as a communion of communities, and the deanery as a communion of parishes.
10. We recommend that positive support be given to engaged couples and married couples, so that strengthened in faith they will go out to evangelise others in like situations.
11. We recommend the training of lay catechists with a view to instructing catechumens and parish visitation and to assist overworked priests. This could be done on a deanery basis.
12. Parallel to this is the recommendation that vocations in the service of the homeless and the destitute should be fostered and assisted financially by the diocese.
13. We recommend the Church in multi-racial inner city areas to reach out in welcome to people of different cultures and religions, for it can be enriched by the diversity that this brings to its life and worship, as well as being the 'caring Christ' for people who are often rejected.
14. We acknowledge that the ecumenical dimension is vitally important in the development of evangelisation. We can witness together by our common baptism. We have a common purpose and a common mission. It is recommended that the development of small groups proceed on ecumenical lines whenever possible, for our ultimate unity will come from joint action.
15. It is recommended that the bishops set up an agency to circulate information on existing schemes for training in lay ministry. The corollary to this is the need for in-service training schemes for priests.

IV. MATERIAL WEALTH

We have spoken of the need for small groups evangelising and being evangelised. Evangelisation involves witness and proclamation. Neither is the least effective if we are a scandal and a stumbling block. In our society and our Church it would seem that we are aspiring to material wealth. We make the following recommendations:

16. We recommend that all members of the Church — bishops, priests and laity — re-examine our life style. We should stand in contradiction to the consumerism of society.
17. We request a clear statement from the bishops of the demands on the individual and the Church of Christ's teaching on material riches.

V. THE LAPSED

One of the results of the failure of the Church to give witness to the gospel is the high number of lapsed Catholics in this country. Many lapsed Catholics are said to experience an unwelcoming Church, a priest unconcerned with real problems, a lack of joy in the Church, a cruel treatment of married people in need. Equally the lapsed may feel that the faith is irrelevant, have never experienced family encouragement, are not accepting, or misunderstand, the Church's teaching on moral issues. The problem of the lapsed is one that needs serious attention.

18. We recommend that diocesan and local organisations are established by the bishops to examine the particular problems of the lapsed, identify the problems and introduce appropriate information and action, especially where this entails changes in liturgy and pastoral structures in the Church.
Laity as well as priests should be specifically asked to share the responsibility for regular contact and friendship with lapsed neighbours.
19. We recommend that the question of general absolution for special occasions be raised by the bishops of England and Wales with the Holy See.

VI. YOUTH

Lapsation is a common phenomenon among young people, and they are seen as a special problem. They should rather be seen as a vital part of the Church with much to contribute. Young people are the Church of

today. Youth need more opportunity for involvement in all spheres in the life of the Church. We need to be able to see things from their point of view. They have much to offer us.

20. We recommend that special attention be paid to the young. We recommend that provision be made for young people in each parish as regards liturgy, formation through apostolic groups such as Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students, and involvement in local activities.

All recommendations in this report we see as a call to all Christians to be evangelised themselves and to form and sustain them in their mission of evangelisation in today's world.

All these recommendations received majority support in both the topic and the sector meeting.

SECTOR D — TOPICS 2 and 3

MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OVERSEAS:

FUNDING AND SHARING IN MISSION

Chairmen: Fr Noel Hanrahan MHM and Mr Reg Bennett

INTRODUCTION

The news from the missionary world fills us with hope. The missions of not so long ago have become Churches in their own right. They are often referred to as 'young Churches', young not only in years but in the freshness and vigour of their faith and in their hope for the future. They are sister Churches to the Churches of the 'old world' equal in dignity and worthy of the same respect.

We rejoice in the knowledge that, with the emergence of these Churches in Africa and Asia, we now, for the first time in history, have a true world Church. The Church of Christ has put on the face of almost every people, even if in many places it is still a 'little flock' among a multitude of non-Christians.

We look with great confidence to the young Churches everywhere as they take up the challenge and share the burden with us of further extending the kingdom of Christ.

Our attitudes and our structures must increasingly reflect this new reality. Above all, we have to recognise that mission is receiving as well

as giving. The young Churches still need our help and support in many ways. They will make known to us their needs. At the same time, as members of the one universal body we need them.

Increasingly, we become aware of what they have to offer us: the sense of community, the joy and celebration which is so much part of the African spirit; the spirit of prayer and quiet contemplation which is so dear to the Asian soul; the passion for justice and social liberation which grips the Church in Latin America. We must be ready to say 'come over and help us'. We have a highly developed structure for giving. We must now develop ways of receiving.

Our Churches in the West may appear somewhat tired at times, but there are many signs of renewed life. Among these our lay missionary movement is one of the most striking and most hopeful. It is remarkable indeed that Catholic missionaries until recently were exclusively priests or religious. A vital dimension of Christian witness was thus lacking. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council this vast source of new energy for mission was released.

We are happy to see the arrival of our lay missionaries in their own right by virtue of their baptism and have a witness to give which they alone can give. It remains to integrate them fully into the missionary movement.

As we look out on the world we are conscious of the three billion people who do not know Christ. An enormous missionary work still awaits the Church. At the same time, we are conscious that Christ is always with his people everywhere, leading them to salvation, even if he is a hidden and unknown Christ.

The insights of the Second Vatican Council enable us to look on the other great world religions with deep respect. God is present in them. We approach them in a spirit of dialogue, an attitude of humble listening and sharing. The way forward for world mission will lie largely in this dialogue with our non-Christian brothers and sisters.

Recommendations

1. Prayer and sacrifice are a basic form of missionary activity. Concern for the Churches throughout the world and for the spread of the gospel must find constant expression in our liturgy and in other forms of the prayer life of individuals and groups.

2. A director for overseas mission and development (priest, religious or lay) should be appointed in every diocese. He or she would co-ordinate and animate the work of the missions at every level. He or she should be able to delegate, especially to the laity, specific tasks which could be at diocesan, deanery or parish level. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a diocesan commission to assist the director. It is recommended that the work of the present diocesan director for pontifical mission aid societies be incorporated into that of the director for overseas mission and development.
3. Appropriate pastoral care should be given to all immigrant and ethnic groups through the recruitment and appointment of an adequate number of special chaplains — the missionary societies should be ready to assist the local Church in supplying such chaplains.
4. It is urgent that we become better acquainted with the background of our immigrants and ethnic groups and in particular that we learn to understand, appreciate and gain from their religious traditions. This can best be done through personal contact and offers of hospitality and reflected in corporate initiatives by parishes (e.g., in giving school places). The giving and receiving aspects of mission can be realised in this way. Our care of immigrants and ethnic groups should be co-ordinated with the work of their own organisations and with that of other Churches.
5. Confirmation candidates should be trained to understand that confirmation is also the sacrament of mission.
6. Bearing in mind that 'sharing' should be total, this Congress urges each parish to accept its responsibility for the work of evangelisation throughout the world by committing a substantial percentage of parish and personal income to missionary and development work overseas.
7. We recognise that certain dangers occur in twinning arrangements but, nevertheless, recommend twinning as an effective form of missionary support and exchange between home and overseas communities. It promotes close personal relations between communities. It also awakens a deeper missionary awareness and opens a way of receiving as well as giving. Support for the pontifical mission works, Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and other mission organisations must not suffer through twinning. In choosing a community for twinning, consideration should be given to the countries of origin of immigrants and other ethnic groups in the parish as well as countries where missionaries from the parish are working.
8. We realise that England and Wales are missionary countries in need of renewal and hearing the gospel again and this should influence

pastoral strategies. Pastoral approaches in mission areas should be studied and applied. One effective way of achieving this would be an exchange of personnel with the young Churches.

9. The promotion of missionary awareness at all levels of the Church is vitally necessary. It should be part of the formation programme of all education establishments and feature in church caring and parish weeks. In parishes it could be done through mission groups. Returned missionaries have a special awareness of missionary needs and the home Church should give them every opportunity to share this with others.
10. The Congress welcomes the development of the lay missionary movement in the Church. It recognises that they are missionaries in their own right by virtue of their baptism and confirmation. They are essential to the missionary witness of the Church. We recommend that they be given their rightful place in all appropriate Church structures and in particular that they receive official financial support. We further recommend that action be taken to ensure that people who undertake missionary work abroad are not placed at a disadvantage professionally and financially when they return.
11. Mission is a prime responsibility of the diocese or local Church. It is expressed in direct involvement in missionary work as for example by sending its own diocesan laity and priests on overseas mission and encouraging missionary vocations. The Congress recommends that the National Missionary Council studies the question of the Fidei Donum priests and makes proposals to the hierarchy. Other forms of involvement in missionary work by the diocese should be explored.
12. We recommend that the National Missionary Council considers how full Catholic membership can be effected in the Conference for World Mission of the British Council of Churches.
13. We recommend that we Christians come together with non-Christian communities on a regular basis for information, encouragement and support.
14. Concern for overseas mission is deeply shared by all the Christian Churches. It is an area in which co-operation is both possible and most desirable. We recommend that all Christian Churches of the area come together on a regular basis for joint missionary action, especially in the local council of Churches.

All these recommendations were passed with large majorities in both the topic meeting and the sector meeting.

WORLD DEVELOPMENT

Chairman: Mr Brian Davies

Evangelisation is centred on the person of Jesus Christ, proclaiming him in word and above all in deed. The Good News that Jesus is Lord involves a message about justice, peace and development. Our responsibility to bring people to a full life in Christ necessarily implies liberation from everything that oppresses and enslaves.

We live in this world as members of one family, God's family. There is only one world and we all share responsibility for its development — yet the world is divided into rich and poor. We use the phrase 'Third World' simply to indicate those countries where so many of our fellow human beings live in sub-human conditions.

Our work of evangelisation includes 'upsetting, through the power of the gospel, mankind's criteria for judgement, determining values . . . and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation' (*Evangelii nuntiandi* n. 19). We are called then to turn the country's values and priorities on their head. In comparison with most of the world's population we have to recognise that we are a rich Church in a wealthy country, and therefore ourselves need liberation from wealth which enslaves us and distorts our attitudes.

We accept too easily our place in a system which perpetuates — even creates — inequality through our trade and investment relations — sometimes even through our 'aid'. The same system is abusing God's gifts through its abuse of resources and the gospel demands that we consider seriously the moral implications of the diversion of resources to armaments. The witness of each individual Christian in these matters, built into the witness of the Church, will be a powerful force for change. Even if we do not see the goal clearly, our call is to trust in God and make that witness — as a matter of justice.

Christ speaks to us in the poor; we need to listen to him, among non-Christians and Christians alike. Only in listening can we understand the needs to which we hope to respond, and develop respect for self-determination. We feel that before all else the Church's strategy must focus on our own education, to understand our own involvement as part of the problem, to see the implications for the way we live, to learn how to listen and to see how to act. The Church must then speak out prophetically on issues concerning the Third World.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

DIALOGUE

1. We cannot begin the process of education and change unless we are willing to listen to the voice of Christ expressed in the poor of the world. The Church in England and Wales must therefore enter into closer dialogue with the developing world by the following means.
 - (a) Bishops should themselves visit the Third World and we should find opportunities and finance for visits by their Church leaders to our country. This idea, already begun, is particularly effective when our bishops are involved in the episcopal conferences of developing countries with a view to strengthening collegial links.
 - (b) Similarly, priests, lay people and religious should be exchanged between dioceses here and in the Third World. This will require careful preparation on the part of those going overseas and a willingness to listen to those we invite here.
 - (c) The Church must listen more attentively to specialist groups at every level and should use the services of existing Christian and secular resource groups (Catholic Institute for International Relations, Amnesty International, World Development Movement . . .) to help us to understand what is being said by grass roots communities in the Third World. In this whole area of dialogue and action we need to work much more closely with the British Council of Churches and missionary societies of all denominations.

EDUCATION

2. Education with regard to the Third World should be promoted at all levels as a matter of urgency, with help from missionary societies and religious orders.
 - (a) A full-time worker for justice and peace should be appointed in every diocese, with the necessary training and financial support.
 - (b) A school syllabus should be produced at a national level backed by resource materials.
 - (c) In colleges of education, seminaries and convents, development education should be seen as an essential part of the formation of teachers, priests and sisters.
 - (d) Each school and college should have a co-ordinator, with responsibility for education in justice and peace and for contact with the diocesan workers, in order to implement the approved

syllabus and to maintain contact with the voluntary and missionary agencies.

- (e) We should not hesitate to identify and share resources and personnel with other churches and agencies.
- (f) There is not enough attention being given, both with regard to finance and personnel, to the Church's own advisory commissions on justice and peace and world development. They should be listened to more attentively when a Christian response to the Third World is being considered.

CHURCH COMMITMENT

- 3. The Church must show its commitment to the Third World by taking action in the following ways:
 - (a) the liturgy and prayer life of the parish and family should reflect concern for the developing world;
 - (b) the importance of the weekly Friday fast, as organised for example by CAFOD, should be re-emphasised and its fruits, both spiritual and material, be directed to those in need;
 - (c) the Church should give substantially increased support to official commissions and resource groups, and make consistent and better use of their services and advice for the formulation of the Church's policy and response to the specific needs of the Third World;
 - (d) dioceses and religious orders should use their investments as a means of exerting pressure on companies to act in accordance with Christian values, thus giving a lead to others to use money responsibly;
 - (e) 10% of parish income should be pledged to development. (Where such an option for the poor has already been accepted, the amount has sometimes been raised by additional giving). To raise the amount, individuals could aim to give from the personal income that amount which at least makes up to 1% what is lacking in the contribution made by them to aid through taxation (0.65% of taxable income at the moment);
 - (f) in order that parishes become centres of concern for the poor in the world, groups should be fostered that inspire the parish through displays, education programmes, 'twinning' projects, etc. Each parish should have a named individual or group responsible for education and action in these areas.

POLITICAL ACTION

4. The body of Christian people in England and Wales could be a tremendous force for change in the balance of power and wealth in the world.
 - (a) We urge an immediate initiative from the hierarchy for an ecumenical campaign embodying demands that the government should:
 - (i) fulfil its commitment to devote 0.7% of the gross national product in aid to the Third World;
 - (ii) make more use of the voluntary agencies in distributing this aid;
 - (iii) review immediately its commitment to devote 0.7% of the gross national product and raise this commitment to a more realistic figure in line with the Brandt report;
 - (iv) in order to facilitate imports from the Third World, consider urgently the necessary restructuring of British industry to assist workers who could otherwise suffer from the consequences of imports of manufactured goods;
 - (v) reverse its policy of increasing expenditure on nuclear arms, thus giving a moral lead to the rest of the world, and spend the money thus saved on aid to the Third World.
 - (b) As Christians we condemn the sale of arms to the Third World and urge church leaders to use their influence to initiate a moratorium on arms sales.
 - (c) We urge the setting up of 'Christian constituency committees' at the local level.

MEDIA TRAINING

The Catholic Radio and Television Centre and the Catholic Information Services should be expanded and upgraded in order to provide greater facilities for the training of laity, clergy and missionary societies.

All these recommendations were passed by large majorities in both the topic meeting and the sector meeting.

D. — EVANGELISATION

1. The 1980s are for the Church a time of decision. The needs of the world and the demand of the Gospel, as we have discerned them, will place on the Church and on individual Catholics responsibilities of a magnitude that few have yet grasped.
2. The task of spreading the Gospel demands of us that we recognise that as a Church in a wealthy country, when so many of our fellow human beings are in dire poverty, we are in fact part of a system which perpetuates, indeed even creates, this inequality.
3. We need to be liberated from a wealth which enslaves us to consumerist attitudes, distorts our outlook and prevents us from responding to need according to the precepts of the Gospel.
4. We are, all of us, bishops, priests and lay people, without exception, called to make a practical re-examination of our life-style. Parishes and individuals must be ready to commit a substantial percentage of their income to missionary and development work and to accept that in the matter of investment Gospel values have priority over financial returns. Our wealth is a scandal and a stumbling block; it is a denial of Christ's love and it belies the Gospel we profess. ✱
5. Indeed Christ speaks to us in the poor; it is through listening to the poor to understand their needs that we get a true insight into the Gospel. The power of the Gospel is impoverished if we fail to reach out to hear those who are in need. Mission can only begin with their need and their questions. We realise that as preachers of God's Word, we speak out of our inadequacy and failure, but in the power of his Spirit.
6. The Church, that is us, must then have the courage to be unpopular, to be ready to speak out on issues of injustice, oppression and poverty. We must be a prophetic sign of contradiction against the values of

our society in areas like trade, aid, armaments and the restructuring of industry, to match the needs of the poor countries. This task will cost and it will be painful.

7. No Catholic can escape his responsibility in this task of witness and of direct proclamation to those outside the Church, the uncommitted, and those of other faiths, that Christ died and rose that we might live. How can we Catholics face this task, if we are not prayerfully renewed by the Gospel? — if we are members of a Church that concentrates its resources on maintenance rather than evangelisation? — if our parish communities are weak, and if the demands of evangelisation, of poverty, are not continually expressed in a vivid and flexible liturgy?
8. The Catholic Church in England and Wales must therefore place its resources in employing personnel in the adult formation of its members and in thorough ongoing education about world poverty. We must devise a strategy that will establish apostolic groups as the base of the local community, so that our parishes are a communion of communities. The stigma of a dead and lifeless liturgy which is the complaint of so many of the alienated must be erased. Barriers must be removed so that the lapsed may rediscover Christ in the life and prayer of the Church.
9. Indeed the Church in England and Wales must make a systematic study of the problem of alienation from the Church, especially of the young, whose loss from the Church constitutes not only a sadness but a profound weakening of the visible power of the Gospel.
10. We realise that England and Wales are now missionary countries, in need of renewal and of hearing the Gospel again. Our Church must discover how to speak to the people of our time in their signs and language and according to their need. This is a task in which ecumenical co-operation is so essential it should be taken for granted.
11. Every member of the Church, without exception, is called to be an evangeliser. We welcome the lay missionary movement, not only for the help and vision it gives to the spreading of the Gospel overseas, but also because it is a vivid example of lay calling and evangelising, which can be a model in our own country. The Church must take the lay missionary movement seriously by being prepared to give them their rightful position in Church structures and to support them financially.
12. The English Church is called to be an outgoing church, not only in our own land. We must also share with the younger churches of

the southern hemisphere in the task of bringing the Gospel to the 3,000 million of the world's inhabitants who do not know Christ. Here too shared work with other denominations is essential and we recommend that the National Missionary Council now considers full Catholic membership of the Conference for World Mission of the British Council of Churches. Missionary awareness is essential not only for this work but also for the vitality of the Church in its own task of evangelising England and Wales.

13. We now live in a world where the majority of Christians are not of European origin, where the gap between rich and poor is ever widening and where Christianity is forced to take seriously the witness given by other non-Christian faiths to the power of God's Spirit.
14. Our calling may demand courage; it certainly demands renewal in prayer, in Christian life-style and in fidelity to the Gospel, but it also presents surely the most exciting, enriching and enlivening opportunity given to our church.

In all humility and in God's grace we accept it.

SECTOR E

Sector E followed the timetable as set down. The topics varied in size more than in other sectors and accordingly topic 1 had 5 groups, topic 2 had seven groups, topic 3 had four groups and topic 4 had five groups.

In the topic meeting, each of the groups presented their reports, including suggested recommendations. It was these reports which determined the development of the topic work rather than agendas formulated by the chairmen. Voting on recommendation at topic and sector level was by show of hands.

The procedure followed in the sector meetings was the same as in other sectors. Topic reports were presented in turn, and discussion followed when no consensus was evident. Votes were taken on individual recommendations and were mostly unanimous or nearly unanimous. Recommendations which gained immediate acceptance by a majority were hardly debated at all. Votes were counted only in a few cases where a sizeable division was apparent. One minority submission from a group of young people was accepted at topic and sector level but the acceptance of their statement reflects the sector's appreciation of the enthusiasm and commitment of the young delegates. It does not imply that all the delegates in the sector agreed with the content of the statement.

SECTOR E — TOPIC 1

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION: PARISH CATECHETICS

Chairman: Fr Michael Fewell CMF

PARISH CATECHETICS

Perhaps the most reassuring point with which to begin this report is that there has been no great feeling of euphoria, but rather simply a convergence of opinion and concern, a growing understanding of the present position, dawning vision of the direction in which we must move, and an impelling sense of the urgency of it all.

The overall subject of our discussions was parish catechetics. For many of us it was necessary to begin with some explanation of what catechetics and catechesis mean — terms we used as inter-changeable. We accepted that catechesis is, as Pope John Paul II expresses it in *Catechesi tradendae*, a part of evangelisation. Ideally it is a second-stage development of, and growing in, faith already accepted. But for many who are already baptised and who have received some instruction which has not brought them to the point of committing themselves wholeheartedly to Christ, catechesis must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith but also with arousing it unceasingly, with the help of grace. Thus, for some, catechesis includes an element of evangelisation. Receiving catechesis is a continuing necessity from which nobody, not even catechists themselves, should feel excused.

Since we all need catechising, and since the only structure which embraces all Church members is the parish, it was agreed that the parish is in essence the principal catechetical centre that we've got. The home and the school have been up to now our main areas of catechetical activity but it was also agreed that our expectations of both of these have been unrealistic. The school cannot achieve the aim of catechesis unless its work is supported in the home, and the home cannot do it unless the parents themselves are receiving continuing catechesis at their own level: there is little point in teaching children if the parents are not being taught. Beyond that, we need to bear in mind the number of adults who are not parents, or not parents of school-age children, who yet require to grow in their faith, to see that the common catechetical centre in which they all meet is the parish.

The great catechetical potential of the liturgy was emphasised. There are many moments in every life when people are specially open to the claims of Christ: points which are cross-roads, when the paths they have taken have brought them to a road Christ wants them to take. Such moments occur at birth and baptism, at marriage and commitment, in sickness and in dying, and other major moments but also many times in daily life when reconciliation is called for and a closer giving of the self to Christ. People don't always know that they are at cross-roads — good catechesis might reveal to them that they are, both in the catechesis of special events and in the catechesis that grows from the Church's liturgical cycle and Lectionary.

At the centre of all this parish catechetical activity is the priest. Obviously, however, the priest cannot conduct all this catechesis himself. What he can do is to tap the resources at his disposal, and inspire his people to dedicate themselves to the work of catechesis.

First, however, he needs to appreciate it fully himself. In this, seminary and in-service training can help him. When he has absorbed the aims and principles of catechesis for himself and for his ministry, he needs then to be able to draw on resources of personnel and materials to assist him in the work of enlarging the catechetical activity of his parish. These resources need to be readily available locally. So, we recommend that every diocese should establish an adequate catechetical centre, fully staffed by trained personnel, and equipped with books, audio-visual aids, and equipment available for sale, on loan, or for reference — as appropriate.

(We acknowledge that in many dioceses such centres already exist. We recommend that there should be one in every diocese, and that in none should anything be spared whether of personnel, stock, or necessary finance.)

In the longer view, we recommend that deaneries — and eventually parishes — should establish such centres according to their needs, and that their own lack of financial resources should in no way be an obstacle to the fulfilment of a task which we present as of first priority. Where necessary, there should be diocesan or other funds available — and we recommend that the whole matter of the allocation of funds should be so reviewed that catechesis, whether in or out of school, receives a share of the financial resources which will give clear confirmation of its pre-eminent position on the scale of priorities.

Among groups of particular importance to which attention was brought are: young people, minority or disadvantaged groups, the handicapped, Catholic children in county schools, travelling people and gypsies and those whose profession (e.g., in the armed forces) involves a degree of mobility which makes it difficult for them to feel a sense of belonging to any one parish. For these, and many others, special provision needs to be made.

For all, but especially for young people, residential experiences are of proved value. Residential youth and pastoral centres provide the environment in which people can for a time leave behind the cares and pressures of everyday life which frequently cloud their vision of Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life; and after the personal human and religious experience of life in such a centre, can go back to their everyday concerns with renewed vigour and a stronger dedication.

Local authorities already have many such centres, but perhaps more need to be provided so that their facilities are available not only for a privileged few.

Where the staffing of such centres, and the provision of all kinds of catechetical experiences are concerned, it must be borne in mind that our greatest resources already exist: people, parish premises, schools, religious houses, etc. What is needed is:

- (a) a recognition of the existing need for catechesis by the people of all ages;
- (b) a recognition of the diversity of catechetical activity;
- (c) encouragement of well-directed initiatives in this field;
- (d) the provision of the only thing which most of our potential catechists lack: training.

Training could be provided by diocesan catechetical teams and services, especially continuous in-service training. They, in their turn, will themselves require training. We recommend, therefore, the development of a national catechetical centre, ideally as part of a national pastoral institute, possibly using the premises of established institutes. This centre should service all the catechists and catechetical needs of the country. It could provide basic training, whether on a residential or other basis, could produce indigenous resource materials (in which we are notably lacking), audio-visual aids, and bulletins containing information concerning, and assessments of, catechetical publications. It could also provide in-service training, as well as monitoring and measuring the catechetical needs of the Church in England and Wales.

Not only are our human resources available in our parishes, but it seems desirable that people should be catechised by those close to them — by their peers. In every neighbourhood there are many potential and active catechists; to encourage them to catechise their neighbours in the small groups into which every parish can be divided would at once break down the barriers which exist among people, and reduce the sense of isolation which inhibits the effectiveness of life in some larger parishes.

Throughout our discussions there was emphasis on parish life as it was experienced by participants. And in every group there were some who could speak of the enriching effects of certain programmes of parish catechesis. Generally speaking, whether these were one of Christiane Brusselman's programmes for the sacramental initiation of children, or the Special Religious Education (SPRED) scheme for the catechesis of the mentally handicapped, or the Neo-Catechumenate, they derived their value and effectiveness from the elements they contained of the adult catechumenate of the early Church. Since this in turn is itself the model for a basis of the new *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*,

which has not as yet been published in its final form for England and Wales, it was agreed to propose that immediate steps be taken to adapt the Rite to the needs and culture of our countries, that it then be adopted as the official programme for catechesis, and that our best resources be made available to provide all the material and training which priests and catechists will need to put it into operation.

Returning to the question of the role of the priest, it was emphasised throughout that although the priest, by virtue of his priestly ordination and his pastoral mission, is a catechist, he cannot do all that is called for by this Congress. The sheer number of catechists envisaged — each working only in a limited area of catechesis or even for a limited time — suggests that besides the voluntary catechists, a full-time, fully paid catechist or co-ordinator would be needed to work in a large parish, or in a group of smaller parishes.

The suggestion that some catechists be paid ought not to obscure the conviction of this meeting that to be a catechist is a vocation and a ministry, and that this can best be shown if the bishop provides thorough training and then commissions the catechists. Their continuing welfare could then be provided by the establishment of a diocesan association of parish catechists, assuring the catechists not only of a sense of belonging and support, but a guarantee of the bishop's kindly supervision and pastoral concern.

The meeting was characterised by a sense of the paramount importance of catechesis — whose aim is 'to put people in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ', a life-long process in which all the baptised are both recipient and ministers of the word of God, in the course of which and in the setting of the parish, the Christian must hear the call of God, accept it, and realise it. Than this, nothing can be more important.

Recommendations

1. The aim of catechesis is to help all people to come to a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and to grow in communion, in intimacy with him. It extends to every member of the believing community: 'Nobody in the Church of Jesus Christ should feel excused from receiving catechesis' (*Catechesi tradendae*, n. 4). Catechesis is a life-long process in which all the baptised are both recipients and ministers of the word of God.
2. Parishes are communities of people whose lives meet in Christ and who continually celebrate and foster their unity in the sacraments,

especially in the eucharist. These are the environments in which the Christian must hear the call of God, accept it and realise it. Parish catechetics integrates and completes the teaching of the faith which begins in the family, is imparted at school and connects religious knowledge with sacramental life. Hence its indispensable necessity.

3. To service all catechists, and the catechetical requirements of the country, we recommend the establishment of a national pastoral institute.
4. The responsibility for catechesis rests with the parish community, of which the Catholic school where it exists is a part. The appropriate contribution of the Catholic school and its limitations in helping pupils grow into faith need to be understood in clear, definite and realistic terms by the parish community.
5. Study at all levels is needed of the meaning and implications of the catechumenate in which adult converts are prepared for baptism as the norm for all forms of catechesis, based on the experience of those who have successfully implemented such programmes, e.g., parishes using C. Brusselman's material, and groups using the SPRED scheme for the mentally handicapped, and Neo-Catechumenate.
6. The widely differing situations of each parish need to be taken into account in any organisation of catechesis. Flexibility and sensitivity are vital, and training programmes ought to be planned which avoid the imposition of stereotypes. If essential elements, as derived from the catechumenal archetype and the General Catechetical Directory are understood and assimilated, there need be no lack of confidence as to the authenticity of content. Approaches and methods, however, can vary according to the demands of a particular situation.
7. We recommend that the *Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults* be given the serious consideration it deserves; that immediate steps be taken to adapt the Rite to the needs and culture of our country; that it be then adopted as the official programme for catechesis and that our best resources be made available to provide all the material and training which priests and catechists will need to put it into operation.
8. It is essential that the rights and responsibilities of parents in the religious upbringing of their children should be spelled out and respected. They are the principal teachers of their children in the ways of faith. The parish must help and support parents in their crucial ministry, especially through the priests and catechists.
9. The parish has the responsibility of providing catechesis for children and young people whether they attend Catholic or non-Catholic schools. In some cases parents may have real grounds of conscience

for sending their children to schools that are not Catholic. The inalienable right of parents to choose a school for their children must be respected in such instances.

10. Regular in-service training for priests is essential in order to enable them to support and encourage their parishioners in their journey of faith towards Christ.
11. The vocation which many lay people receive to be intimately involved in handing on the faith should be encouraged and fostered. The work of catechists needs recognition and status as an important ministry. They should be thoroughly trained and then commissioned by the bishop.
12. The establishment of diocesan associations of parish catechists should be encouraged. These can provide:
 - (a) official recognition and consequent status;
 - (b) basic as well as continuing training;
 - (c) support and a sense of belonging.
13. Full-time catechist co-ordinators are essential in both large parishes and groups of smaller parishes or at deanery level.
14. In view of the priority which must be accorded to parish catechetics, we recommend a review of the funding of religious education in order to re-allocate money for this imperative need. Each diocese, deanery and parish should begin at once to set aside money for parish catechetical work.
15. Provision of catechesis for young people (15 plus) is particularly urgent at special times, e.g., when they leave school, adjust to work or unemployment, become engaged, marry and have children or when they experience moral and religious doubts. Parish catechists who are trained youth ministers can draw upon resources within the parish, people who have expertise in these areas and who are readily available to listen, to counsel and support.
16. Residential experiences are of proved value. In deaneries a team of people skilled in this special catechetical work is vitally needed to organise youth days and evenings to ensure follow-up. Such occasions should be often provided. They enable young people to meet on their own level and to catechise each other; they should always relate to the parish.
17. Young people with no real sense of belonging due either to lack of parental support, lack of parochial involvement or other factors, need personal contact to rebuild confidence. They need to be valued for

themselves, treated with seriousness and to know that help is available in times of crisis.

18. Young people can experience catechesis through sharing in the liturgy; themselves catechising the very young and by being involved in caring activities — for the old, the handicapped, single parent families, justice and peace, etc.
19. It is essential that the catechetical possibilities of the liturgy (eucharistic and non-eucharistic) be exploited. The catechetical pattern of the lectionary, for example, is still largely unknown in this country.
20. Special types of catechesis for minority or disadvantaged groups are deplorably absent — we urge special catechesis for the handicapped, the deaf, the blind, the elderly. Catholics in the armed forces who frequently need to be integrated into the parish must not be forgotten. Chaplains cannot necessarily look after scattered families owing to the work with Services personnel.
21. Religious have given generously to the catechetical effort in the past and continue to do so. We ask them to respond wholeheartedly to the needs of the local Church. The local Church should welcome them into the parish catechetical life.
22. We eagerly await a statement from our bishops which will endorse these proposals.

These recommendations were agreed upon by the whole of the topic group, and all received majority support in the sector meeting.

SECTOR E — TOPIC 2

SCHOOLS INCLUDING SCHOOL LITURGY

Chairman: Mr Norbert Winstanley

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

There was overwhelming support for the continuing existence of our Catholic schools.

Delegates realised that pupils come from a varied background of faith and that in the present situation of falling rolls, admission of non-Catholic pupils might occur but they stressed that the Catholic character of the school should be preserved at all costs.

Joint Christian schools are possible, but should not be promoted solely because of expediency. They should emerge gradually after lengthy consultation.

COMMUNITY OF FAITH

The Catholic school should be identified as a community of faith, nurturing the love of Christ in all aspects of life. There should be a dynamic relationship between the school community, parents, priests and parishes.

Full commitment of all staff to the ideals of the Catholic school was considered to be essential. Pupils should receive a good academic foundation as well as a grounding on the teachings of Christ. Christian values should permeate the whole life of the school. The school should aim to foster, through the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church, a growth of commitment to the love and service of Christ. Delegates emphasised the necessity to develop strong relationships both within the school, with the local parish, and between the primary and secondary Catholic schools in the catchment area.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Members recognised that the Catholic school is but one agency in catechesis. Parents are the 'first and best' teachers in ways of the faith and it is the parents' right and responsibility to prepare and present their children for the sacraments. It is the responsibility of school and parish to provide the strongest possible support to parents.

Members of this topic group did not produce any clear guidelines as to the age at which young people should receive the sacrament of confirmation, beyond pledging the support of schools to local needs, but one group specifically requested that the sacrament of reconciliation be celebrated more frequently, especially in Catholic secondary schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The statement under the heading 'community of faith', which declared that all staff should be committed to the ideals of the Catholic school, applies most particularly to religious education. If religious education is not recognised by all as requiring the highest priority, then the task of those responsible for religious education in the school is made increasingly difficult.

Delegates requested that there should be a common core of religious education, established nationally, which would cater for the needs of all levels, including pre-school and post-school. Any prepared document should be inspired and dynamic, containing a clear formulation of the teachings and doctrines of the Church.

Specialist teachers of religious education are needed in primary as well as secondary schools, and their departments should be given the highest status in the school.

LITURGY

The celebration of liturgy is at the heart of the life of the school. Preparation of liturgy should be thoughtful and appropriate to the needs of the age group. Consideration should be given to co-operation with parents and parishes so that school and parish liturgy do not appear to be separate and distinct.

Prayer begins at home. Memorised and formal prayer is necessary; spontaneous prayer is extremely valuable. It is essential that the Church teaches parents how to pray with their children, and that a definite prayer life evolves in every Catholic school.

Residential courses aimed to promote a definite 'religious experience' were thought to be invaluable for both pupils and teachers. Caring Church teams were praised most highly.

TEACHERS

Delegates felt that the greatest care should be taken in the appointment of teachers to our Catholic schools. A high percentage of committed Catholic teachers is desirable in every Catholic school.

The Christian formation of teachers is vital and members suggested that high priority be given to the establishment of in-service courses for the pastoral and spiritual development of teachers. It was suggested that financial provision should be made for such courses in each diocese.

CHAPLAINS

All groups supported the need for chaplains, with a preference for priest chaplains. They recognised the special requirements of the secondary school but appealed for consideration at primary school also. Parish

clergy should be encouraged to visit schools on a regular basis. At secondary school, priests should be afforded access to all pupils, but particularly to members of their own parishes.

GOVERNORS

The changes in the educational laws, relating to the composition of governors, were welcomed as giving an opportunity for wider participation in school decision-making by the Catholic community. Governors should know the school by making regular visits to meet pupils, teachers and parents.

Courses for governors should be an essential feature of diocesan responsibility. No governor ought to be appointed without undergoing an initial course for training.

Governors should comply with the bishops' memorandum on the appointment of teachers. Governors should be elected for a maximum of two terms of three years duration.

Miscellaneous items not included in the main report for various reasons:

- (i) Chaplains in higher education proposed that there should be a national review of the effectiveness of the Catholic school. Only one group elected to study this proposal. This group rejected the proposal as members felt they had insufficient evidence of the proposed enquiry to make a positive judgement.
- (ii) Some members in one group pleaded for a return to the devotional practices in school, of Rosary, Benediction and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- (iii) One group recommended that all diocesan education commissions should establish closer links, than those that exist at the present time, with teachers' professional associations.
- (iv) The diocesan education commission should give support to Catholic teachers who teach in non-Catholic schools.
- (v) The standard of the Catholic Teachers' Certificate is inconsistent. It does not equip adequately the new teacher for his or her task.
- (vi) Parents should be informed of the aims, method and content of religious education in the Catholic school.
- (vii) Diocesan schools commissions in consultation with other diocesan agencies, should give careful consideration to the religious formation

- of those children who have special educational needs (e.g., physically and mentally handicapped pupils) to enable them to integrate fully into the parish community.
- (viii) Some young delegates recommended the establishment of a national office to develop consultation with young people especially in matters of religious education and liturgy.
 - (ix) Members of one group requested that present syllabuses of religious education should follow more closely the guidelines in the General Catechetical Directory.
 - (x) The youth group requested a list of residential centres which would meet the requirements of younger people.

Recommendations

1. There should be a nationally acceptable common core syllabus of religious education, which should be regularly monitored. Any preliminary discussion on the formation of such a core should include participation by parents, teachers and young people. At no stage should the content of religious education be limited to preparation for examinations.
2. Christian schools should be considered as a possibility at secondary level, provided that they are based on a positive philosophy of Christian education and not proposed merely for pragmatic reasons.
3. There should be co-ordination at national level of all catechetical work in England and Wales; for this purpose we urge the establishment of a national pastoral institute.
4. The head of the religious education department in both primary and secondary schools should be given special training. Religious education should be taught only by teachers of competence and faith. Stress should be laid on in-service programmes. All teachers should be trained to teach religious education.
5. The religious education department should be seen to be of at least equal status with other departments in the school.
6. Since teaching is a ministry within the Church, the possibility of shared training for priests and teachers, especially catechists, should be investigated by the Bishops' Conference.
7. Since the Christian formation of teachers is of vital importance, opportunities must be created for teachers to improve their knowledge and to develop their own spirituality. Financial provision for this work must be made by each diocese.

8. Each secondary school should have a full time chaplain. The bishops' memorandum on school chaplains should be implemented. Care should be taken in appointing chaplains to schools. Facilities should be made available for school chaplains to develop the necessary skills and qualities required.
9. All governors must receive initial training before appointment. Statutory rules must be kept.
10. Space in schools should be made available for use by the local community in a positive and imaginative way.
11. Diocesan schools commissions should establish a close link with teacher and other professional bodies.

These recommendations were agreed upon by the topic group and carried by large majorities in the sector meeting.

PROPOSALS FROM YOUTH DELEGATES

The following points represent the view of a small group of young people from dioceses throughout England and Wales.

- (i) Religious education in Catholic schools should be compulsory. However, we do feel that this subject should not necessarily be geared towards an examination.
- (ii) We feel a great need for specialist religious education teachers who are practising Catholics, especially at secondary school level.
- (iii) With regard to the nationally acceptable common core syllabus of religious education, we strongly feel a need to include the following:
 - (a) Catholic doctrine
 - (b) Christian living in the modern world
 - (c) moral teachings of the Church
 - (d) Scripture
 - (e) Liturgy
- (iv) More retreat centres must be made available to all young people.
- (v) Encouragement should be given during school life for youth activity on a parish and diocesan level so that school leavers have a developed interest in parish and diocesan activities.

TERTIARY EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC LIFE

Chairperson: Sr Dorothy Bell RSCJ

Conscious of the enormous efforts, together with a very considerable financial outlay over the last 50-60 years of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, towards the provision of Catholic primary and secondary schooling, the topic group considered that the presence of the Church in tertiary education is seriously undervalued. Scarcity and unevenness of chaplaincy provision in tertiary education could negate all that primary and secondary schools have done. In this connection, tertiary education is taken to mean all education in groups after the age at which education is compulsory (16) and at a different place from where compulsory education was received. It refers to courses rather than institutions, hence the link with 'academic life'. Nevertheless, specialist institutions such as medical and nursing schools, agricultural colleges, military, naval and air force establishments also came into our thinking.

Throughout our discussion, our awareness that the number going into tertiary education over the last 15 years has greatly increased, made us very conscious of the need for an extension of pastoral care. The fact too that the variety of types of tertiary education establishments has also increased coloured our thinking. Despite cuts in funding, the number of students going into tertiary education is likely to increase and the pastoral needs of both staff and students merit special consideration.

Four major items were discussed: firstly, the need for better preparation for school leavers entering institutions of both further and higher education; secondly, the role of the chaplaincies; thirdly, the value and significance of the intellectual apostolate of the laity; fourthly, the role of the Catholic colleges.

With reference to the adequate preparation of those entering tertiary education we were concerned for Catholics coming both from Catholic schools and from non-Catholic schools. School leavers often enter a hostile or indifferent secular world, far removed from their experience in the majority of schools from which they have come and they will be hard put to it to face up to the challenging questioning they will meet. It is clear that school provision of systematic courses in religious education, as distinct from religious studies, is vital. More effective use of General Certificate of Education ordinary and advanced level religious education examinations, where these exist, should be made and specially designed curricula for those not following those courses. There is a national shortage

of religious education teachers, and the attention of sixth formers should be drawn to degree courses in theological studies in universities and in the Catholic colleges, and they should be encouraged to follow them. In this way the shortage of religious education specialists in schools, for whom young people themselves are asking, may eventually be overcome. There is an urgent need to upgrade the status of religious education posts in schools so that they are seen to be relevant and attractive. Many of the students in the group considered that the provision of a manual or compendium of basic religious knowledge and practice written specially for the student age group and having the official recognition of the hierarchy would be a valuable contribution and that this book should be provided free to all potential students. It is not only at the level of religious education that students need to be better prepared but also that they have a greater awareness of their social responsibilities as legal adults at the age of 18.

On the question of the identification of Catholics going into higher education, there was division; some delegates thought that it was an intrusion into the privacy of students for schools and parishes to forward names to chaplains without the knowledge of the students. Other delegates, however, pointed out that the Church's pastoral responsibility required continuity to be maintained. All recognised the responsibility of the Church for the pastoral care of new students in tertiary education. It was also felt that a closer liaison between secondary and tertiary sectors would be of value; for example, the desirability of having governors with experience in higher and further education on the governing bodies of secondary schools and putting interested sixth formers in touch with staff and students already in tertiary education could help to counteract the cultural shock often encountered by 'freshers'.

On the second main item of discussion the group considered that the entire college, polytechnic or university is the ministry of the chaplain and includes staff and students, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The chaplain's functions are multiple and are based on his Christian witness in what is at best a religiously neutral environment. He must be able to exercise a varied liturgical sacramental ministry. He has an important role both in evangelisation and in systematic catechesis and he must be able to preach at an appropriate intellectual level, even though theological expertise may be available elsewhere in the institute or locality. Counselling and general pastoral care will be paramount amongst his activities and in this in particular he could be helped through a team ministry which would include religious together with laymen and women. An interesting development might include students on a sabbatical year sharing in the team's work. It was stressed that the ecumenical dimension towards Christian unity was increasingly important and that the multi-national dimension must never be forgotten. Care for lapsed and non-practising

Catholics must be shown; important in all these aspects is the chaplain's welcoming approach to all and his ability to offer hospitality. Throughout the discussions there was constant reference to the splendid and often under-appreciated work done by chaplains; because of the value of this work, we want it extended as widely as possible.

Considering the important role that both priest and lay people play in the chaplaincy community, it was stressed that specialist training is a necessity and particularly so for priests. Part of the training for a full time chaplain should be a term in a chaplaincy prior to his appointment. Since pastoral care concerns a student not only during term time but also in vacations, all parochial clergy should be able to relate to their student parishioners and for this and other reasons we recommend that all seminarians should have experience of ordinary student life during their priestly training.

The group was well aware that the shortage of priests may make the provision of a chaplain in all institutions of higher education an impossibility and offer the idea of establishing itinerant chaplaincy teams where it is not possible to provide a permanent chaplain. Such teams might be based within a region and carry out their activities on a pattern of 'Caring Church Weeks'. Another suggestion is that the practice adopted in the Services of using the senior Catholic as a responsible group leader should be explored.

A further aspect touched on in this respect concerned the link between the chaplain and local parishes. This was seen to be of particular importance in helping overseas students who might not be able to go home for the vacation and who could be helped by families in the parish, but also to be of importance for students in non-residential tertiary education institutions.

At the level of the intellectual apostolate, many of the laity felt that there was a need for regular meetings at a national or regional level between chaplains and Catholic academics. This was seen as a valuable means of solving the communications problem and of making available up-to-date information about courses, conferences, expertise, etc. It was also stressed that mutual encouragement and support is essential and this includes the chaplain and members of the team as well as those in the wider community. Meetings of this kind could, for example, consider the relationship between the natural and human sciences and theology, between the applied sciences and Christianity. Many stressed the need to provide on an appropriate level for the deepening of a religious understanding and awareness and of catechesis for both staff and students. The comment of Cardinal Newman in 1852 is relevant: 'We want a laity . . . who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know

their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much history that they can defend it'.

Delegates recommended that all those involved in tertiary education, in teaching, in administration and the students themselves, should recognise their share in the Church's responsibility in the pastoral welfare and catechesis of others especially where there are no chaplaincies. It would be useful if simple training could be made available and that individuals be helped to an awareness of their potential in the pastoral care of others.

On the role of the Catholic colleges, it was strongly emphasised that the colleges have a part to play quite distinct from the academic in that, as Christian communities, they provide a particular environment for the provision of professional studies for intending teachers, and the ethos is of particular value to those preparing to be specialist and non-specialist religious education teachers. Now that the majority of Catholic colleges offer a variety of degree courses, it is good that this Catholic environment is available to a wider group of young people. The colleges should and do make provision for in-service courses for teachers and others, including priests. Above all, the colleges should provide an experience for both students and staff of the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church.

There was some discussion about the Catholic Teacher's Certificate and the alternative ways in which it may now be gained, in particular by graduates from universities. Over the last two years there has been close consultation between the divinity lecturers in Catholic colleges and the diocesan catechetical advisers; both now have a common basic syllabus and the same certificate is offered to students following the course under either method. Further details may be obtained from the Catholic colleges or from the diocesan catechetical advisers. Many in-service courses are available through diocesan centres.

Bearing in mind the importance of the Church's witness through its presence and influence in tertiary education this group made firm and unanimous proposals for:

1. the setting up of a national commission — or the appropriate expansion of an existing organisation — to take note of the diverse needs of the tertiary education sector, with special reference to students in further education;
2. the development of a national policy on the role of the chaplain, both lay and clerical, and of the chaplaincy community;
3. the appointment of a bishop-in-ordinary with particular responsibility, akin to that of the bishop for the armed forces, dealing not only

with chaplaincies but with all institutions of tertiary education, through neighbouring parish priests where there are no chaplaincies; this is a high priority;

4. the provision of adequate financial support and the allocation of other resources to realise the above recommendations.

This report gained majority support in both the topic meeting and the sector meeting.

SECTOR E — TOPIC 4

ADULT EDUCATION AND SACRAMENTAL LIVING

Chairman: Dr Jonathan May

On behalf of the topic group the chairman presented the following paper: CARE (Catholic, or is it Christian? Adult Religious Education).

1. This topic group sees adult Christian education as the major priority in renewal of the life and work of the Church in this generation. We believe on the evidence of all the Congress papers and our own experience that this view is shared widely within the Catholic Church in this country today.
2. Adult education has to do with the recognition of the worth and dignity of each individual in the full context of Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and embraces concern for the formation and development of each member of the Church (using the term Church in its broadest sense).
3. Adult Christian education must start where people are, acknowledging different levels of commitment, age, cultural and linguistic differences and senses of belonging, and be deployed to respond to human needs, especially in the development of personal faith.
4. At the heart of this process must be the real experience of community which includes both giving and receiving and finds its fullest expression in sacramental worship.
5. Mutual support of laity and clergy is central and essential.
6. Ways of liberating and encouraging local initiatives backed by training and support structures at all levels, parochial, deanery, diocesan and national/provincial, should now be actively explored and accepted.

7. The ecumenical dimension should be seen as an essential part of the fabric of the formation of learning and understanding the mystery of the Church. The Catholic Church in England and Wales should take the initiative.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Catholic Church in this country makes a positive visible decision to make adult Christian education a priority and accepts at all levels the resource implications of this commitment. We consider a firm financial commitment essential, even with regard to other priorities.
2. We welcome the research and other work of Upholland Northern Institute and the activities of Westminster Adult Religious Education Centre (within the context of the Westminster Education Commission). We welcome, also, the proposal to set up a national catechetical association. In our view these initiatives should be confirmed and developed. We noted also the valuable contribution of Plater College.
3. We note and welcome the many diocesan and local initiatives and schemes and feel now is the time to establish adequate support structures and policies at all levels. As a first step we recommend that each diocese should, as a matter of general policy, establish a diocesan adult education resource centre and a diocesan co-ordinator of adult education, in the context of the educational work of the diocese. As a group we felt that many contributions were not as widely required and appreciated as they might be and that urgent attention be given to improving communication in this area.
4. We recommend that serious attention is given to the immediate development of the in-service education and training of priests, at least part of which should be shared experience with laity.
5. We recommend that determined efforts should be made to liberate and utilise resources available at local levels, particularly in terms of human talent and physical resources, particularly schools and colleges.
6. The aims and intentions of the Second Vatican Council in the renewal of the liturgy still have to be achieved. We recommend that at parochial level we find ways of enabling sacramental living and the life of prayer to become a reality.

This report gained the unanimous acceptance of all members of the topic group. It was accepted by a large majority in the sector meeting.

E. — CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION

1. 'Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God': All have the right to hear the word of God, and it is the Church's special duty to proclaim this word to all. The proclamation must be made always and everywhere, to the Church's own people as well as to those who do not belong to the household of the Faith.
2. The task of this sector has been to consider how members of the Church can, in their differing situations, be helped to hear the Gospel message in its fulness. The education in faith and formation of the Christian is a work that is never completed. However holy and however wise a person may be, he still needs the opportunity to grow in holiness and faith. So we have been concerned with people at every stage of their lives and at various levels of commitment who, through their families, parishes and schools can be led to an initial faith; and with adults for whom at every stage of their lives there exist opportunities for growth in 'wisdom and grace before God and man'.
3. There were four topics which were concerned respectively with catechesis in parishes and schools, all forms of tertiary education and with adult Christian formation. Each topic group presents a number of background statements which are then followed by a set of recommendations.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

4. 'Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way orientated to it'. The General Catechetical Directory gives priority to adult Christian education and formation, vital to the renewal of the life and work of the Church.
5. In this adult catechesis concern is with the formation and development of individual members of the Church, taking them as they are with

their different levels of commitment, different ages, different stages of cultural development, linguistic differences and senses of belonging. Fundamental to this process must be the real experience of community, which includes both giving and receiving and finding its fullest expression in sacramental worship. This demands the mutual support of laity and clergy and the encouragement of local initiatives, backed by training and support from national, diocesan and parish levels. An essential part of this formation is the ecumenical dimension where the Catholic Church in England and Wales should take the initiative.

6. Religious education is a work of partnership between parents, priests, pupils, teachers and catechists. In this work the Catholic school has an important place, although it is recognised that it is only one among many agencies of catechesis.
7. The value of the Catholic school was strongly affirmed, it being stressed that our schools should be seen to be properly distinctive and different from the non-Church school.
8. The particular task of the Catholic school is to provide an experience of a living Christian community within which all members of the school — pupils, staff and parents — can be helped to mature in faith. This requires close attention to religious education both inside and outside the classroom; to the celebration of the liturgy as a means of building and strengthening the community; to the pastoral care of all the members of the community.
9. In view of the difficulties in providing an adequate religious education it is seen to be necessary to prepare, after wide consultation, in an inspiring and dynamic document, a common core of religious education which can be used for the preparation of syllabuses by the local Church.
10. The importance of a school being staffed by committed and professionally trained Catholic teachers can scarcely be exaggerated. All teachers, whether Catholic or not, have a spiritual and counselling role to play. There is a need, also, to help and support the Catholic teacher in the County School.
11. The celebration of the liturgy in schools is at the heart of the life of the school. In particular the school can play its part in co-operation with the parish in preparing pupils for the sacraments of initiation; this is a responsibility to be shared by the whole Christian community.
12. Prayer begins at home, but pupils must be helped to pray both formally and spontaneously. The proven value of pastoral and retreat

centres is recognised in the opportunities they offer for community living and the experience of prayer. These centres should be used for the fostering of true Christian relationships between teachers, pupils and parents, priests and governors so that the essential Christian ethos pervades the whole life of the school.

13. The pastoral care of the school community calls for the frequent presence in the school of the local clergy. Chaplains are seen to be essential for the proper functioning of Catholic secondary schools.

TERTIARY EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC LIFE

14. Tertiary education is understood to be all education in groups after the age at which education is compulsory (i.e., 16 years) and at a different place from that in which compulsory education was received. In other words it refers to courses rather than to institutions.
15. School leavers entering tertiary education establishments often meet an indifferent or even hostile environment, far removed from their Catholic or non-Catholic school experience. They need more adequate preparation for this transition. The culture shock for such freshmen can be very great and could be counteracted by social gatherings beforehand of staff and students. Means must be found to provide a more secure academic religious formation which will enable students to face challenging and critical questioning.
16. There was division of opinion between younger and older delegates over the question of prior information being sent to chaplains from schools and by parish priests about the religious affiliation of new students. The younger people felt that this infringed their privacy, their independence and their freedom of choice although it was generally recognised that the Church is right to be concerned about pastoral care for freshmen.
17. Discussion on the role of chaplains and team ministries covered the need of both staff and students for on-going catechesis and a deeper knowledge and understanding of their faith. Because of the paramount significance of the eucharist, varied celebrations of the liturgy are important. The prayer dimension of life must be fostered.
18. The role of the Catholic colleges in providing a suitable environment for nurturing the faith of future teachers and of specialist and non-specialist RE teachers in particular was stressed.

19. The lifelong process of growth to intimacy with Jesus Christ extends to all the baptised who are both recipients and ministers of the Word of God. It was agreed that the normal environment in which people hear the Word of God, accept it and celebrate it, is our parishes. Up to now our expectations of both home and school have been unrealistic. There is little point in teaching children if parents are not also being helped to grow in faith. We need also to bear in mind single people and adults who are not parents. The common catechetical centre in which they all meet is the parish.
20. There were those who spoke of the enriching effects of certain catechetical programmes. The most effective of these incorporated elements of the adult catechumenate of the early Church. This is the basis of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. It was agreed that steps be taken to adopt it.
21. It was acknowledged that our greatest resources already exist: people, parish premises, schools, religious houses, etc. What is needed above all is training. This ought to be provided at diocesan and national levels.
22. It is desirable for people to be catechised by those who are close to them. In every parish there are both potential and active catechists. These should be encouraged to accept this vocation and, after thorough training, to be commissioned by the bishop.
23. At the centre of all parish catechetical activity is the priest. He cannot conduct all catechesis himself. What he can do is to tap the resources at his disposal and inspire people to dedicate themselves to this work.
24. The urgent need for varied, exciting and flexible catechetical programmes for youth was studied as well as for minority or disadvantaged groups: the handicapped, Catholic children in County Schools, travelling people and gypsies, and those whose profession involves a degree of mobility which makes it difficult for them to feel a sense of belonging to a parish.
25. The parish has the responsibility of providing catechesis for children and young people whether they attend Catholic or non-Catholic schools. In some cases parents may have real grounds of conscience for sending their children to schools that are not Catholic. The inalienable right of parents to choose a school for their children must be respected in such instances.

Selection of Recommendations

This selection of recommendations gives an indication of the trend of the proposals:

1. That there is a positive, visible decision to make adult christian education the priority, accepting the resource implications of this;
2. That the initiatives in adult christian education taking place in some institutes of religious education be noted and developed;
3. That, recognising diocesan and other local initiatives in the field of adult education, adequate support in terms of personnel and material resources be provided;
4. That the in-service training of priests, in which the laity also take part, is needed to make the best use of all resources, human and material;
5. That ways be found of enabling sacramental living and the life of prayer to become a reality at parish level;
6. That there be a study of the meaning and implications of the catechumenate model, in which adult converts are prepared for baptism, as the norm for all forms of catechesis;
7. That the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* be adapted to the needs and culture of our country and then adopted as the official programme for catechesis;
8. That the vocation of the catechist be recognised and that after adequate training catechists be commissioned by the local bishop;
9. That to service the catechetical needs of the country there be established a National Pastoral Institute;
10. That full-time catechist co-ordinators are appointed in large parishes, or for groups of smaller parishes or for deaneries;
11. That the catechetical possibilities of the liturgy be recognised and used, especially the pattern of the lectionary;
12. That a common core of religious education be prepared at national level to ensure proper continuity and development in the formation of diocesan syllabuses;
13. That religious education in schools should be taught only by teachers of competence and faith;
14. That the RE department of a secondary school should be seen to be of at least equal status with all other departments in the school;

15. That, given the importance of the Christian formation of teachers, opportunities be made for their growth in wisdom and holiness through appropriate in-service training and spiritual formation;
16. That since teaching is a recognised ministry in the Church, the possibility of shared training for priests and teachers should be investigated;
17. That the bishops' *Memorandum on School Chaplains* be implemented, and in particular that each secondary school should have a full-time chaplain;
18. That all governors receive adequate training before appointment to a school;
19. That, especially in view of falling rolls, space in schools should be made available for use by the community in a positive and imaginative way;
20. That diocesan Education Commissions should establish close links with teacher and non-teacher professional bodies;
21. That the possibility of establishing Christian schools should be carefully considered, provided that they are based on sound principles of Christian education and are not proposed for merely pragmatic reasons;
- X 22. That, in the pastoral care and religious education of pupils, particular attention should be paid to those pupils who are not practising or who have rejected their faith, so that they still feel part of the Church and of the school;
23. That recognising the importance of the Church's witness through its presence and influence in tertiary education a commission be set up to take note of the varied needs of the increasing number of staff and students in higher education;
24. That a national policy outlining the role of the chaplaincy and of the chaplaincy community within institutions of tertiary education be prepared;
25. That a bishop be appointed to have sole responsibility for the pastoral care of all Catholics in tertiary education;
26. That all seminarians should spend part of their priestly training in an ordinary tertiary education environment;
27. That an attempt should be made to provide some form of chaplaincy service to all institutions of tertiary education; an itinerant team on the lines of the Caring Church Weeks might be considered where full-time chaplains cannot be appointed;

Youth Submission

The younger members of the sector have contributed much to the consultation. Among their particular contributions can be singled out the following recommendations relating to Catholic schools proposed by a small group and wholly endorsed by the sector:

- i) that religious education for Catholic pupils in Catholic schools should be compulsory;
- ii) that courses in religious education should not necessarily be related to examinations;
- iii) that there is a need in all schools for specialist religious education teachers who are committed and practising Catholics;
- iv) that any national core curriculum should include Catholic doctrine, Christian living in the modern world, the Church's moral teaching, scripture and liturgy;
- v) that retreat centres be made readily available to all young people;
- vi) that encouragement be given during school life for youth activity on a parish and diocesan level, so that the school leavers have a developed interest in parish and diocesan activities.

Conclusion

The hopes of the Church in this area of her mission are well expressed in the prayer of St Benedict:

O gracious and holy Father
give us wisdom to perceive you,
intelligence to understand you,
diligence to seek you,
patience to wait for you,
eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate upon you,
and a life to proclaim you;
through the power of the Spirit
of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SECTOR F

Sector F followed the timetable as set down. Topics 1, 2 and 3 had six groups and topic 4 had five groups.

SECTOR F — TOPIC 1**WORLD OF WORK**

Chairman: Mr Frank Lane

UNEMPLOYMENT

The rising level of unemployment is an acute problem and is placing many people under greater strain, young and older workers alike. This in turn is affecting the stability of the family, with husbands often forced to seek employment in a different part of the country, even abroad.

The problem of youth unemployment is also particularly worrying, giving rise to crime, vandalism and alcoholism among young people. Development of technology is likely to create even more unemployment and consequently multiply the problems. The advent of the silicon chip, together with the shorter working week, are beginning to alter radically the shape of the world we live in.

Reaching and having effective contact with the unemployed in our parishes is essential if we are to understand their needs and problems.

Recommendations

1. The Church should speak out clearly on the grave social injustice of unemployment, and should seek ways and means of contributing to a positive response from those in authority.

2. The present level of unemployment is unacceptable and represents a grievous social injustice. National and local government, unions and industry should be urged to divert much greater resources to the relief of the present level of unemployment. For example, by utilizing vacant land and buildings to provide new employment opportunities. Greater investment of Government funds should be made for the relief of this grave social problem.
3. There are many practical ways in which the Church could use its resources to alleviate some of the problems.
 - (a) Work of refurbishing church buildings could be undertaken by the temporary employment scheme of the Manpower Services Commission, so that young people may benefit from it.
 - (b) Setting up leisure centres for unemployed where they can enjoy the company of other people without the need for spending money.
 - (c) In some areas premises are needed for setting up training workshops or co-operatives. In these, and many other ways, the local church could be seen to be concerned and involved in the problems of the unemployed.

WOMEN AT WORK

Women go out to work for a variety of reasons: economic necessity, loneliness, to enjoy a higher standard of living or being left to rear a family on their own. It is accepted these are good and acceptable reasons for so doing. It was felt that the natural and positive role of women, to rear children, should not be hindered by consideration of accepting a lower standard of living or pressure arising from modern employment legislation, which seems to encourage a mother to return to work as soon as possible. More emphasis should be placed on the positive contribution to human well-being performed by women who devote themselves to home-making.

Elements of discrimination against women still exist. Employers are often reluctant to provide opportunities for women to go on courses or other forms of investment. In teaching, as in other professions, women are disproportionately in the basic and lower scales. Therefore, more should be done to provide equal opportunities for women.

Recommendation

4. The Church should re-emphasise much more the creative work of being a wife and mother and elevate it from being 'only a housewife'. The Church respects the status of those women who are pursuing

occupations, whether they be unmarried or wives and mothers. The Church should look at particular pressure points: single-parent families; women with dependent sick or elderly relatives; mothers with young toddlers.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION/ADULT EDUCATION

There is still a lack of understanding and knowledge among working people of the Christian concept of work and the Church's social teaching on the subject. On the other hand there are many 'active' lay people in the workplace and society trying to apply Christian principles to their lives and work. Often these people are working in isolation and without support from the Church. We recognise and reaffirm that the best apostles to working people are working men and women. It is in this task that the laity need more support and assistance in the form of training and development.

Recommendations

5. In view of the complexities of industrial life, we believe there should be special consideration given to the use of diocesan and national resources to enable a continuous review of the social and economic factors which influence industrial life. This review should be carried out with regard to the Church's social teaching, and provide pamphlets, reports or other means of communication which inform, help or direct Catholic thinking on the subject of industrial life.
6. The 'world of work' is important because of the central position it occupies in all our lives. More than any other aspect, its effects can influence our whole way of life. So too, the Church should recognise its importance and give effect to this in its structure. A bishop appointed to this important sphere would be a good beginning.
7. In Catholic schools, careers departments should give a greater amount of their time to helping young people to choose the right job and preparing them for the world of work in a Christian way.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

There was a high consensus of opinion that work provides a tremendous opportunity to be Christian witnesses. Essentially it is the individual's ability to be true to the gospel message which allows him or her to be an effective witness. To see hope even in the face of unemployment is possible for the Christian because he has a proper perspective of the purpose of life.

Recommendation

8. The collective body of the Christian church should give serious consideration to recommending that Christians do involve themselves in those organisations which purport to be representative of them at work. The most urgent consideration for all committed Christians is how they will prevent the take-over of the trade union movement by the 'ists' of the world — Communists, Trotskyists, Marxists, etc. — and become yet another 'ist' in this world which is a 'Christianist'.

INDUSTRIAL MISSION

Recommendation

9. The mission of the Church at parish level should include places of work within their boundaries. There are already chaplains for schools and hospitals. Their pastoral concern should be extended to the people who work in these establishments as well as patients and pupils. This work should be further developed by the appointment of full-time industrial chaplains. This would help both clergy and laity.

LITURGY

Recommendations

10. The feast of St Joseph the Worker should be upgraded to emphasise the importance of the world at work.
11. The homily at Mass should be used to help people to relate their Christian faith to their working life.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Recommendation

12. Dioceses and/or deaneries are asked to form broadly-based pastoral committees. It is recommended that these committees should keep under constant review the rapid changes in our industrial society. The committee should pay special attention to the issues raised in this report and its implications for the local pastoral strategy. This committee should liaise with ecumenical groups where it is appropriate, in line with the injunction that we should not do separately what we can do together as Christians.
13. We recommend that a national working party be established to continue and develop the work done at this Congress.

The world of work is a sphere in life in which the Church is absent. Very little is heard or written about the various aspects of work and especially about the grave moral questions that people face every day at work. There is a need for real guidance and positive encouragement in unequivocal terms on such subjects as the closed shop, strikes, lock-outs and the whole question of profit. In this connection there is a great need for simplified versions of the Church's social doctrine to be made available on a wide scale.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

New technology is posing new questions about the need to work, which have moral and social implications. It was felt that a committee of experts should be formed to study the likely effects of new technology over the next ten years. A Christian approach has to be worked out. Has the stage been reached in human development and technological progress where we may need to consider alternatives to work itself and how man's economic, social and spiritual needs can be satisfied without work?

PREPARATION FOR WORK

There is a need to expand further education and training facilities for young unemployed workers. In some areas there exists a serious problem of mis-match between job opportunities and the preparation for working life provided by the school. Catholic schools should be encouraged to develop stronger links between the school and industry, commerce, trade unions and the community in order to assist school-leavers to find suitable jobs. Involvement of church organisations, as the Young Christian Workers' School to Work Service, should also be encouraged.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Relationships between workers and management was a cause of concern for many. It was felt that each should be encouraged to develop a truthful and Christian approach, in their relationship with each other.

There was a clear need to develop worker-participation in the different levels of decision-making in industry. This requires more education about industrial relations and democracy.

Concern was expressed about the power of multi-national companies. Individuals within them felt isolated and helpless, especially when closure of factories is involved. It was felt that closures were attributed to exploitation of Third World countries. Multi-national companies should seek ways and means of creating more opportunities for their workers to be involved in decision-making. Feelings were expressed about discrimination in the job-market, not only against workers from abroad but also from different parts of the United Kingdom. The Christian message of love needs to be spelt out clearly in the most sensitive areas of life.

SECTOR F — TOPIC 2

URBAN AND RURAL LIFE

Chairman: Professor Robert Leaper

'The Church is not of the world, but it is in and for the world' (Pope Paul VI), quoted by Archbishop Worlock, May 2, 1980.

A record of the full discussion on this topic is contained in the group reports which are an integral part of our conclusions. Here we list some of the major issues which show up in the report and to which we want to draw attention and on which we ask for action by all of us in the Church.

1. The decline in vocations to the priesthood and the higher proportion of elderly priests, together with the drop in Mass attendance, challenges us and provides an opportunity to develop new ways of working as Christians in both urban and rural areas. (*Lumen gentium*, n. 33.)
2. We need to make better use of the rich resources of personal and professional talents to be found among all ages of Church members.
 - (a) This demands some changes in attitudes of both clergy and laity, and will entail preparation to undertake new roles.
 - (b) We need to think again of the many 'ministries' to be performed within the Church in a variety of activities.
 - (c) Priests and bishops should be freed from many administrative, organisational and financial responsibilities which can be taken on by lay Catholics, thus leaving priests to perform their essentially priestly duties more effectively.

(a) Second Vatican Council Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, n. 9; *Lumen gentium*, n. 31. (b) *Populorum progressio*, n. 81. (c) Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11.

3. We now have an opportunity to develop new structures (a) within the Church which meet people's needs more closely and involve them more effectively in a worshipping and caring community. (b) Parish boundaries need to be reviewed from time to time, and there should be more frequent exchanges and shared activities between parishes. Sometimes deaneries may be a better framework for activity for all Church members. House Masses and house groups focus on the home as a centre of Christian witness, and are a vital supplement to worship and care based on the Church buildings.

(a) Mk 2:27-28 and *Gaudium et spes*, n. 44. (b) Mk 12:28-31.

4. The solution to many urban and rural problems lies in establishing a Christian influence in political and community development. (a) Many Catholic organisations have a positive role to play in achieving this aim by training and supporting Catholic lay people in this important area of the Church's mission. (b).

(a) Decree on the Church's missionary activity. (b) Decree on the pastoral office of bishops in the Church, n. 17.

5. We need to develop better links and exchanges between parishes both rural and urban. This promotes a greater awareness of our all being members of a universal Church and helps a better understanding of living conditions in other parts of the country. (a) This is important in view of greater mobility during working life and more retirement to rural and seaside areas. Such contacts can be promoted by youth groups, branches of Catholic associations, and groups with common interests, but the importance of the personal element has to be stressed in this growth of what we may call the 'picnic movement'. (b).

(a) *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4; *Octogesima adveniens*, n. 4. (b) *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 46; Archbishop Worlock's homily, May 2, 1980.

6. Continuing attention must be given to the needs of people in the inner city areas where a combination of poor housing, vandalism, the emigration of the young married, better educated and more skilled, and the increase in unemployment demands special effort to rebuild a new community life in which the Church must play a part.

7. There is a need for new uses for Church property and resources which have often been concentrated in areas where they are no longer needed. Imaginative schemes for re-allocating such resources have already been tried in some areas and their example should be studied and imitated.

8. Transport and housing also present problems for people in rural areas and the difficulties facing Christians living in scattered communities must not be forgotten, particularly since more elderly people are moving into, or remaining in, these rural areas.
9. Young people are an integral part of the worshipping and caring community of the Church, and groups such as the Young Christian Workers and the Catholic youth associations have a special part to play. Yet more young people than before seem to have rejected Christ's call, seeing it reflected in forms of Church activity which repel them (a). More than any other age group, those under 25 are affected by their peer group. All members of the Church must help to reach out to those outside the fellowship of the Church and welcome them to Christ's challenge and love.

(a) John Paul II: Catechesis in our Time, n. 42.
10. At parish level there must be constant reassessment of the real, not the assumed, local needs. Parish programmes of activities, often in fellowship with other Christians, need to be drawn up with the involvement of all concerned, in the light of the need to develop as Christians in a changing world. (Social Welfare Commission: *'Good News to the Poor: The Church and City Problems'*, 1980).
11. The elderly will form an increasing proportion of the population in all areas, with particular problems for rural dwellers. Our strategy of action in collaboration with statutory and voluntary agencies must not lose sight of an ageing population, including our responsibility for elderly priests and religious.

SECTOR F — TOPIC 3

PUBLIC AND CIVIC LIFE

Chairperson: Mrs Pat Case

It is a right and a duty to give Christian witness. Everyone has a public as well as a private life. Everyone influences the community in some way, and a few will find an active apostolate in public life.

As the Decree on the Laity (n. 14) puts it, 'in loyalty to their community and in fruitful fulfilment of their civic obligations Christians must promote the common good, they must make the weight of their opinions felt so that civil authority acts with justice, laws conform to moral precepts and the common good is advanced'.

The time is ripe for more positive involvement. Catholics are more integrated and accepted than before. The problems facing society internationally, nationally and locally, demand that men and women of God are in the seats of power, and exert influence on the decision-making process.

In the face of increasing intervention by public authorities in so many facets of our lives, Christian witness encompasses not only central and local government, but the whole range of statutory and voluntary bodies. Suggested areas are: European Parliament, Parliament, political parties, local authorities, statutory authorities, Justices of the Peace, trade unions, professional associations, vocation guilds, pressure groups, school governors, parent-teacher associations, consumer councils, community health councils, neighbourhood groups, youth organisations and voluntary welfare societies.

For the Christian there is a part to be played at any point where social policy is initiated or implemented. We must influence the perception of the problems so that in a period of scarce resources the right priorities are established, as well as oppose solutions unacceptable to the Christian conscience. To be an effective force we must overcome whatever remains of the historical impediments to integration, the sense of powerlessness felt by many individuals, distaste for and suspicion of politics, ignorance, apathy and indifferent organisation. We must stand up and be counted. We must accept that in a caring community to love is to serve.

Steps to action

(A) BY IDENTIFICATION OF TALENT

We all have God-given talents. Are we using them effectively in Christian witness? In parish, deanery and diocese we need knowledge of the skills and interest of the Catholic community so that they can be put to use.

(B) BY EDUCATION IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TEACHING

Better informed Catholic citizens are essential: schools should play their part by a more 'systematic' programme of instruction in the framework of the political system. Instruction in the Church's social teaching should be the backcloth against which these political facts are taught, the one infusing the other. The Young Christian Students and Young Christian Workers have important training roles. Catholic Members of Parliament,

Justices of the Peace, councillors, trade unionists and others could talk to children and parishioners, personalising and humanising the system, showing how much can be done to ameliorate the difficulties of one's fellowmen and thereby enthusing the young to translate their idealism into action.

The seminaries should ensure that priests are equipped to respond to the role thrust on them of being a mini 'Citizen's Advice Bureau' and that they understand the political structures and know where to turn to find help for their parishioners.

Homilies and parish newsletters should be used to draw attention to issues of public, as opposed to parish or spiritual, concern and local branches of societies, for example, Age Concern, should be invited to speak at discussions or, on appropriate Sundays, at Mass.

(C) BY DEVELOPING CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

There is no possibility of the Church being a greater influence for good in society until the community of the Church puts its own house in order and achieves that openness, co-operation and unity which are the foundation of the high standards which we urge upon others. We need an effective Church organisation and effective channels of communication. Organisations must begin at the parish, the basic eucharistic community, to permit the development of powerful deanery pastoral councils which could preferably be co-terminous with local authority areas. Parish and deanery councils should be concerned, in conjunction with local councils of churches, in questioning parliamentary candidates and briefing MPs. But they should also be involved in local issues, often on an ecumenical basis, e.g., lunch clubs for the elderly, and pre-school play-groups run in co-operation with statutory services and manned by local volunteers, drawing all the strands of public life together.

The Bishops' Conference must have greater confidence in giving guidance by unravelling the issues of public concern and setting them in the context of Catholic social teaching. To professionalise support for the bishops, more priests should become specialists, for example in housing, childcare, etc., and the national information services should be developed.

SUPPORT

We believe that Catholics in civic life must be supported by the community of the Church by recognition of the value of their contribution, by helping them to sustain that involvement with the direct affairs of the Church, which they must to some extent sacrifice, and by restraint in the

demands made upon them by the Church and its members. Trust in the integrity of committed Christians working in public life for the common good could be engendered by an annual service of dedication. Catholics will be sustained in the ministry to their places of work, by, for example, the lunch break Mass and by the celebration of significant local events by an act of worship.

PATIENCE AND HOPE

The present phase in British politics and society is one with many questions but few answers: by contrast, for instance, with the time around the Second World War when fifty years of debate had sorted out many of the main issues of the time and given a chance for consensus to emerge. People then had a formed vision of the reforms which they wanted to achieve. Today, in the face of the many new questions which came up in the 1960s and 1970s, but were not then ripe for an answer, they are naturally confused. The Church could offer a two-fold message of patience and hope. We have good institutions through which a solution to current problems could be achieved. Our personal spiritual renewal and commitment to Christian witness in public life will lead to the creation of a better society.

SECTOR F — TOPIC 4

COMMUNICATION

Chairman: Rev. David Miles-Board

Preamble

The purpose of our communication is to spread the Word of God and proclaim the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We fully recognise the value of personal communication. The immediate links we forge with one another in love will always be the highest form of Christian communication.

Modern mass media have unprecedented power over the minds of people. Media technology is getting more and more sophisticated.

The Church must reach the people where the people are.

We can reach the uncommitted and the lapsed by means of popular programmes and press, talks, publications and audiovisual aids.

We stress the urgent need to train Catholics, clerical and lay, in every aspect of communications. We must know what it is we have to communicate, and equip ourselves to do so in the most professional way possible. Our approach must at all times be confident, based on prayer and mindful of the holy purposes of Christ's Church.

We address this message to every Christian: If you as a person, show what you really are in Christian terms, then you become the message of all time, with the spirit of your witness shining out from your words.

1. CLARITY AND COHERENCE IN PARISH LITURGY

- (a) The language of Church utterances and documents should be easier to understand. It should be vivid, but free from jargon, especially in sermons.
- (b) Sermons should methodically teach the doctrines of the Church, and be expressed in a form suitable to the particular congregation present, for example, children.
- (c) And 'the recipients' — the congregation at Mass — should prepare themselves and listen with full attention.
- (d) Young people should be involved in planning for the Mass.
- (e) Gestures, symbols, audio-visual aids may well be the element of a more suitable language for some religious messages.
- (f) It will help priests to attend in-service training courses on sermon giving, where closed circuit TV could be used for evaluation. Nothing replaces the authority which comes from a life of prayer and study. This gives confidence. In-service training which deepens prayer and knowledge of the faith is of high importance for the priest.

2. LAY PEOPLE IN THE PARISH

- (a) When newcomers arrive they should be welcomed both by the clergy and lay people especially delegated to meet them, perhaps at coffee after Mass.
- (b) They should quickly be offered the support of a family group.
- (c) Family groups should be outgoing and especially try to unite the lapsed into membership. Indeed, they should always strive to interest new members.

- (d) More generally, the 40% who attend Mass should see their obligation to the 60% who do not. They should not simply leave this obligation to the clergy.
- (e) A communications person or group should work particularly on parish communications, collect and collate items for transmission to all the people, for instance through the newsletter. They can act as a watchdog to monitor the media. They should concentrate on all communications, especially in dealing with the local press and radio. A parish directory may be a good idea.
- (f) Bookshops and bookstalls of better quality are needed, and so are parish lending libraries.
- (g) The witness — spoken or written — of lay people to apostolic work they have undertaken can be most inspiring.
- (h) Lay people should be confident about their role and remember that the Holy Spirit is in them. They do not need to fear contacts with the press, radio and television.
- (i) Other media mentioned for lay participation were magazines and newspapers with cartoons and good layout, exhibitions and audio-visuals. By these means and by deliberate personal contact, an even greater number of active parish helpers will be gathered.
- (j) It should be stressed that whilst bishops and priests are receiving too much information to assimilate, lay people are receiving too little.
- (k) Parish pastoral councils are strongly recommended.

3. THE ECUMENICAL SETTING

- (a) The local parish should be instructed about ecumenism and be totally outgoing. It should belong to the local council of churches; have an ecumenical representative on its parish council; exchange its newsletter and other material with local churches and make contact with groups of non-Christians.

4. THE DEANERY AND DIOCESE

- (a) Information officers are important figures at every level. They are needed as resource people in the parish but most importantly as sources of information and expertise in deanery and diocese. When the job is crucial, it is strange that there are so few.

- (b) Deanery and diocesan pastoral councils are needed.
- (c) The pastoral letters from the bishop should also be printed and recorded on cassettes so that his message may reach everyone in the simplest way. Bishops should encourage priests to pass on suitable information of general interest from *ad clerum*.

5. FORMATION

- (a) A special effort should be made to deepen and enrich the faith of those who go to Mass. Paradoxically, apathy about adult education co-exists with a more fundamental spiritual hunger. The paradox can be resolved by using all the skill and imagination of the people of God to develop and communicate a thorough adult catechesis.
- (b) New media — film, video cassettes, slides and tape — may well awaken the indifferent.
- (c) The available options in all aspects of the liturgy should be more widely used.
- (d) Study and prayer in groups with particular emphasis on the study of the word of God are fundamental. We should draw on the expertise and resources of religious communities.

6. TRAINING

- (a) Training is the crucial factor and this was reported by all groups.
- (b) The courses of the Catholic Radio and TV Centre and of the Catholic Information Services, and other agencies, were commended as vitally necessary. There might also be collaboration with other training centres in the local authorities and in colleges of education.
- (c) Training is important to educate lay people in what they can do in parish communications, lay societies, deaneries and dioceses.
- (d) Training is important to help priests and religious communicate even more effectively.
- (e) Training is important to prepare for new skills and to work on broadcasts and newspapers in a thoroughly professional way.
- (f) Training is important to understand the mass media — particularly the new media — both to contribute to them and to evaluate them.

- (g) Though costs are moderate by secular standards, the cost of this training seems high to Church people. It is especially important that subsidies be given, or fees should be met by parishes, deaneries or dioceses.

7. THE CATHOLIC PRESS

- (a) It was contended that the Catholic press is starved of material, interest and support. It is not fully used and all of us have a responsibility to use it.
- (b) But it was also fiercely attacked for its trivialisation and narrow outlook, and for the lack of charity displayed on correspondence pages.
- (c) On the other hand, the information contained as a witness to Christian values, both to Catholics and to a wider audience, was of the greatest importance. Appeal to youth readership is essential.
- (d) Diocesan supplements should not reduce the sale of wider Catholic papers with a national and international outlook.

8. THE MEDIA GENERALLY

- (a) Local media are of towering importance for Christian contribution and coverage. A planned effort must everywhere be undertaken to use them.
- (b) Do-it-yourself media — newsletters and 'underground' papers — are of an enormous importance, especially in giving the young a voice.
- (c) The press must be fed with accurate information to avoid biased coverage especially where minority views might generally attract too much public notice. Here the information officers are all-important.
- (d) A willingness in priests and laity to ensure press contacts should also be balanced by a willingness to write sensible and constructive letters both of praise and of complaint. Here again the advice of information officers is very necessary.
- (e) Every effort should be made to meet local reporters and editors.
- (f) Every one praised the wide range of opportunities offered by religious broadcasting. But not all opportunities were fully used,

for instance in local radio. More documentaries would be welcomed and sometimes broadcasts of religious services — though vital for the housebound — were excuses for not thinking more dynamically about creative programmes.

- (g) Programme evaluation in school and in parish is of vital importance. The editors and producers value constructive criticism. The audio-visual is a new language and discrimination must be used.
- (h) Programmes and items not specially earmarked for religious purposes can often be more valuable for Church news and views.
- (i) Church literature from the Catholic Truth Society was widely praised, though sometimes there was a feeling that some pamphlets and books were over-intellectual for their audience. Such publications should never be 'stuffy' and should be of the highest quality in layout and design.
- (j) The Church should not be left behind in grasping the opportunity to use new means of communication. It should ensure that its voice is heard through satellite television, cable vision, teletext and view-data, and the other new media.

9. MORALITY AND THE MEDIA

- (a) We should strive to use both internal and external media to express the truths of the gospel and profound Christian living.
- (b) The groups showed some distress of mind about sex and violence on television and in the cinema and theatre. Perhaps local parishes could bring pressure to bear for suitable plays and films. They could also help to spread the news of the real content and worth of these media.
- (c) Our own interior media sometimes did not follow the main lines of Church teaching. An example quoted was the teaching on birth regulation. Insufficient publicity has so far been given for the 'Billings' method of natural birth regulation. Young people are particularly confused about this.
- (d) There was some concern about the long term influence of materialistic advertising even where this was in accordance with proper standards and truthfulness.
- (e) Catholics working in the media have a responsibility to provide valuable witness, reaching many who otherwise would not hear the Word of God.

10. Throughout, the groups stressed that we should be more confident and less reticent. We should above all work for a strong and rational chain of two-way communication: person and parish, parish and deanery, deanery and diocese, diocese and Holy See. The older methods of communication should not be neglected just because they are old. For instance, parish visiting by priests, religious, lay organisations and parishioners was seen to be vital. Person to person communication is the most important kind.

We see Christ as the supreme communicator on whom we should model ourselves.

F. — CHRISTIAN WITNESS

1. THE Christian cannot separate his life into compartments. As his task is to show forth Christ's love and truth he must aim to be Christ in his every action and to see Christ in every person he meets at work and home, among strangers, friends and neighbours — even the uncaring and the hostile. Through the example of his personal life, the service he gives to others, his willingness to commit himself to action, he seeks to build a community based on love and sharing.

THE WORLD OF WORK

2. The challenges of the world of work are manifold and testing. Present in all our minds must be the problem of unemployment. The witness of the Church must be that of a caring community in the world of work. Man's dignity must be respected at all times but particularly if he should be unemployed.
3. The stress on family life is increased when husbands have to seek jobs in other parts of the country or abroad.
4. Youth unemployment is particularly worrying. Quite apart from the degrading and demoralising effects it has on the individual it leads to serious social problems of vandalism, alcoholism and crime.
5. We propose that the Church should speak out clearly on the grave social injustice of unemployment, and should seek ways and means of contributing to a positive response from those in authority. National and Local Government, unions and industry should be urged to divert much greater resources to the relief of the present level of unemployment. We would like greater investment of Government funds and restoration of cuts to Work Experience programmes.
6. A practical way in which the Church could use her resources is in sponsoring employment schemes approved by the Manpower Services Commission so that young people can receive employment experience,

and in providing social centres where unemployed people can enjoy the company of others without incurring high costs. In some areas premises are needed for setting up training workshops or co-operatives. Redundant church premises could be offered. In these and in many other ways the local church would be seen to be concerned and involved in the problem of unemployment.

7. Much thought has been given to the position of women at work. The Church respects the status of those women who are pursuing outside occupations, whether they are unmarried or wives and mothers. However, more emphasis should be placed on the positive contribution to human well-being performed by women who devote themselves to homemaking.
8. Working women often face discrimination. Employers are often reluctant to provide opportunities to attend training courses which provide the basis for advancement. In many occupations women are disproportionately in the lower pay scales. More should be done to provide equal opportunities for women.
9. We propose that the Church should look for and seek to relieve particular pressure points, single parent families, women with dependent sick or elderly relatives, mother and toddler groups.
10. In attitudes to work Christian formation and adult education are of great importance. In view of the complexities of industrial life, diocesan and national resources should be made available to enable a continuous review to be carried out in regard to the Church's social teaching and to provide, by pamphlets, reports and other means, information on Catholic thinking on the subject of industrial life.
11. The world of work is important because of the central position it occupies in all our lives. Its effects can influence our whole way of life. We propose that the Church, too, should recognise its importance and give effect to this by appointing a bishop for this important sphere of life.
12. In our Catholic schools, careers departments with full-time career teachers should give more of their time to helping young people choose jobs and to preparing them as Christians for the world of work.
13. The world of work is a fruitful field for Christian witness. Christians should be encouraged to involve themselves in those organisations which aim to represent them at work. The most urgent need is for all committed Christian workers to work within the Trade Union

movement, and by so doing help it to retain its traditional industrial role.

14. The Church has a vital industrial mission. The mission of the Church at parish level should include all places of work within parish boundaries. There are already chaplains appointed to schools and hospitals. We propose that their pastoral care should be extended to the people who work in those establishments by the appointment of full-time industrial chaplains. This step would help both clergy and laity.
15. Turning to the liturgy, we propose that the feast of St Joseph the Worker be upgraded to emphasise the importance of the world of work, and that the homily at Mass be used to help people to relate their Christian faith to their working life.
16. Diocesan Pastoral Committees could play a significant role. Dioceses and deaneries are asked to encourage the formation of broadly based pastoral committees. These committees should liaise with ecumenical groups in areas where it is appropriate, in line with the injunction that we should not do separately what we can do together as Christians.
17. Finally we recommend that a national working party be established to continue and develop the work of this Congress.

RURAL AND URBAN LIFE

18. Turning now to rural and urban life, there are fewer priests, and their average age is increasing. Vocations to the religious life are falling. Mass attendance on Sundays is about 40% of baptised Catholics. Inevitably we must plan new ways of working, both in town and country.
19. We need a flexible approach to sharing tasks and responsibilities and this will call for changes of attitude in both clergy and laity. To free priests for their priestly duties, finance, administration, social and educational activities should be entrusted to the laity. Parish boundaries should be reviewed so that they correspond to changes in population and local needs. There should be positive encouragement of house Masses and home meetings to supplement worship at church.
20. All of us in Christ's Church have our different 'ministries', and we must develop these to fit new needs and to make best use of all the talents.

21. Both inner cities and rural districts with scattered populations have their own special problems of housing, transport and education, linked to employment — and they too can learn from each other. The 'twinning' of parishes and the encouraging of visits between the people of both will help to create an awareness of the opportunities and an understanding of the problems experienced by urban parishes and the rural parishes. Local needs change quickly, and so should be kept under constant review, in order that they can be met with flexible and local responses.
22. Church property and resources are often redundant in some areas, and desperately needed in others. We must seek ways to put this imbalance right.
23. Since we are failing — at the moment — to attract young people to answer Christ's call, we need to reach out more imaginatively.
24. We must be sensitive to the need to make special provision for the increasing proportion of elderly people in our society.
25. The breadth of imagination and the scale of the work needed to develop and apply new strategies is apparent. But if individual Christians exercise their responsibility for witness through action, leadership and service at parish, deanery and diocesan level then, under the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit, these things will come to pass.

PUBLIC AND CIVIC LIFE

26. Considering public and civic life, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, the Vatican Council Decree on the Laity puts it: 'In loyalty to their community and in fruitful fulfilment of their civic obligations, Christians must promote the common good, they must make the weight of their opinions felt so that civil authority acts with justice, laws conform to moral precepts and the common good is advanced' (n. 14).
27. We urge an increasing number of Catholics to seek an active apostolate in the vast field of central and local government and of statutory and voluntary bodies. Opportunities range from the European Parliament to the neighbourhood council, trade unions, school governing bodies and consumer councils of all kinds. The time is ripe for positive involvement now that Catholics are more integrated and accepted. The problems facing society, internally, nationally and locally, demand that men and women of God play a part at every

point where social policy is initiated or implemented. We must influence the perception of the problems so that in a period of scarce resources the right priorities are established. We must also oppose solutions unacceptable to the Christian conscience.

28. Better informed Catholic citizens are essential, and the schools have a special role to play. Instruction in the Church's social teaching should be the backcloth for a programme of instruction in the framework of the political system. This could then be humanised and personalised by talks from Catholic MPs, Councillors, Trades Unionists and others showing how much can be done to reduce the difficulties of one's fellow men. We believe that this would encourage young people to translate their idealism into action.
29. The seminaries, too, should ensure that priests are equipped to respond to the role thrust on them of being mini-'Citizens' Advice Bureaux', and that they understand the political structure and know where to turn to find help for their parishioners.
30. A strengthened Church organisation at parish and deanery level could identify the skills and talents of the Catholic community and put them to appropriate use.
31. They would be able to act in conjunction with local Councils of Churches in identifying needs, providing solutions, pressurising authorities and in high-lighting key issues on which the Churches are right to take a stance. We look to the bishops individually and collectively to give members of the Church guidance in carrying out this social duty by setting issues of public concern in the context of Catholic social teaching and taking full account of up-to-date knowledge of these issues.
32. Those Catholics in civic life must be supported by recognition of the value of their contribution. An annual service of dedication could emphasise respect for their integrity. The celebration of Mass in places of work and on the occasion of important local events would be equally supportive.

COMMUNICATIONS

33. Like the supreme Communicator, Jesus, Christians must identify themselves with those with whom they seek to communicate. The finest personal communication is Christian love. This human and immediate communication is crucial. For an example of this, we urge

our parishes to re-examine how they welcome newcomers and, where they can, to form small family groups to give initial and continuing support. What is more, we should be able to invite the lapsed and the uncommitted into membership of these groups, which should always be outward-looking.

34. We do not take enough advantage of local opportunities in press and broadcasting to communicate with non-Catholic neighbours. We must train many more people in all the techniques available to them. We should appoint information officers and form communication groups in dioceses, in deaneries and in parishes. Through this working information network it should then be possible to communicate with the people where they are, in language they understand. These needs are urgent; cost must not be a bar to the training of any suitable person.
35. Trained people will learn to use better publications, talks, and audio-visual aids to form people for deeply Christian living.
36. The Catholic Press has a vital place in our Church communications. We must support it. Equally, the Catholic papers must win our confidence by achieving high standards. In particular, they should find every possible way of attracting young readers.
37. Opportunities for further work in religious broadcasting are fully open to us, and not all of them have been seized. Likewise, we must not criticise local press for lack of good news in its pages until we have done everything in our power to keep it fully and professionally informed.
38. A major step towards encouraging media professionals with constructive criticism — for there are dangers of materialistic and degrading exploitation in some programmes and papers — would be to encourage the study of the press, radio and television. From school and onwards, people of all ages gain immeasurably by striving to understand these media which bring information.
39. Christians should have confidence, not fear, in working for better coverage and better comment in the media. We wish to speak out to each Christian and to say: 'If you, as a person, show what you really are in Christian terms, then you become the message of all time, with the spirit of your witness shining out from your words'.

SECTOR G

Sector G followed the timetable as set down. Each of topics 1, 2 and 4 had five groups and topics 3 and 5 had four groups.

Each topic chairman drew together a topic agenda which was used as the basis of the topic meeting, with additional material from groups being submitted as well. Recommendations were formulated or submitted and voted upon, and, where accepted or rejected, these formed the topic report. Individual voting figures on recommendations are given in the reports.

The procedure used in the sector meeting differed from that of the other sectors in that there was no voting on particular recommendations. Instead, as each topic report was submitted to the sector meeting, the delegates were asked to vote for or against endorsing it. Endorsement was explained as giving agreement to the general tenor of the report without necessarily agreeing with every phrase. Topic 4 had 87 individual recommendations and was only endorsed by 75% of the sector with a sizeable number of abstentions. Voting in all topics was done by show of hands and the exact figures are given at the end of each topic report. The procedure adopted in the sector meeting has the disadvantage of making it impossible to assess the weight of support for individual recommendations, especially where these did not receive very large majorities in the topic meetings.

SECTOR G — TOPIC 1

RACIAL JUSTICE

Chairman: Mr Christopher Power

'We must recognise the fundamental human dignity of each individual and preserve a real concern for everyone involved, but particularly for minority communities in our midst and for those who are vulnerable or insecure. Those who already enjoy a life of peace, and security should endeavour to share those blessings with others'.

This sentence from the bishops' of England and Wales statement on the revision of British Nationality Law (July 1979) sounds the keynote for the whole Church's response to the issue of racial justice. The Church in England and Wales is composed of people of many backgrounds and traditions.

Unhappily, racism has corrupted the attitude of many people in the white majority communities as well as destroying the confidence of some members of black minority communities.

The Church is therefore faced with a very serious situation with which it has failed to come to terms so far. There is an urgent need for constant consultations with black Catholics; reallocation of resources for racial justice work at regional and local level, as well as financial assistance for black self-help groups. Parish life needs to be renewed in every aspect of its actions and institutions.

Catholic schools, seminaries and colleges of education should consider carefully their role and curricula in the context of a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. But the pastoral needs of black Catholics and other minority groups of Catholics are not the only matters the Church must address itself to in relation to racial justice. The Church has a clear responsibility as described in *Populorum progressio* to overcome racial discrimination.

'Racism is . . . a cause of division and hatred within countries wherever individuals and families see the inviolable rights of the human person held in scorn'.

The bishops of England and Wales should reiterate the Church's condemnation of the National Front and other similar racist organisations, and in particular that membership of the Church is incompatible with membership of those organisations. The bishops should urge all local authorities to declare equal opportunities' policies in respect of housing and employment. We believe that discrimination is still strongly practised in the fields of housing and employment, and that the existing laws for tackling it are inadequate, and that official complacency would be unjustified.

The topic meeting was unanimous in supporting the bishops' statement on Revision of British Nationality Law (July 1979) and in asking that it should be widely publicised. Consideration should be given as soon as possible to a pastoral letter in each diocese to publicise and explain this statement.

In order to ensure that family unity and human rights be respected without racial distinction, the bishops should ask the Government to set up

an independent inquiry into migration policy as a whole; and meanwhile should support the call of the Commission for Racial Equality and the British Council of Churches for an independent public enquiry into the conduct and control of the immigration service and the manner in which its considerable discretionary powers are exercised.

It is essential for peace in our whole community that everyone of whatever racial or ethnic origin should feel confident in the impartial and equal administration of the law.

There was some dissension, however, in the topic meeting on what part the Congress should play in commenting on the specific public order issues raised at Southall (April 1979) and Bristol (1980).

Twenty-two members voted to ask the bishops to press the Government for an official public inquiry into the events in Southall and an inquiry into the reasons for the riot in St Pauls; 11 members voted against and 11 abstained.

By a large majority the bishops were asked to take note of the widespread concern that exists about the relationship between the police and racial minorities, more particularly their young members; to press for reform of the complaints' procedure against the police and for better training in police colleges concerning the multi-racial society.

1. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

In order to promote and encourage a multi-cultural, multi-racial society:

- (a) the Church should ensure participation locally and nationally of black Catholics in every area of Church and community life (e.g., liturgy, administration and consultation);
- (b) bishops, priests and teachers should:
 - (i) actively encourage parents and young people to pray and work for vocations from among black Catholics;
 - (ii) develop the lay apostolate and leadership potential from among black Catholics;
 - (iii) explore the possibility of setting up special funds to finance black self-help projects;
- (c) funds should be made available to promote regional and local racial justice work;

- (d) bishops and priests should preach on the issue of discrimination and should involve themselves in local Community Relations Councils and other organisations concerned with racial justice;
- (e) support minority chaplaincies (including West Indian and Asian) where they are effective, until such time as the difficulties of integration experienced by these minorities no longer exist.

2. CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICY

This must encourage the multi-racial and multi-cultural nature of our society by:

- (a) ensuring that selection procedures for entry to schools are fair, and do not discriminate on grounds of race or cultural background;
- (b) ensuring that the boards of governors and teaching staffs should reflect the multi-racial and multi-cultural composition of the school;
- (c) ensuring that seminaries, colleges of education, schools and in-service courses include multi-racial and multi-cultural studies;
- (d) making studies of existing teaching materials to exclude any materials of a racist nature;
- (e) giving consideration to the admission of a certain number of black non-Catholic and non-Christian children to Catholic schools where this is seen to be desirable.

Carried unanimously.

3. RACIST ORGANISATIONS

The bishops should reiterate the Church's condemnation of the National Front and other similar racist organisations and, in particular, that membership of the Church is incompatible with membership of those organisations.

Carried unanimously.

4. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The bishops should urge all local authorities to declare 'equal opportunities' policies in respect of housing and employment. We believe that discrimination is still strongly practised in the fields of housing and employment; that the existing laws for tackling it are inadequate, and that official complacency would be unjustified.

Carried unanimously.

5. BRITISH NATIONALITY LAW

The group strongly supports the bishops' of England and Wales statement on the revision of the nationality law, and that their proposals should be widely promulgated in a pastoral letter as soon as possible. In particular, the group considers that:

- (a) nationality and immigration issues should be clearly distinguished from each other;
- (b) the Church should use its influence to ensure that Commonwealth immigrants already resident in the United Kingdom and those from countries newly independent, should not lose existing rights;
- (c) the Church should request a speedy registration process for those British subjects who lose their United Kingdom citizenship when their countries of origin become independent.

Carried unanimously.

6. IMMIGRATION LAW REFORM

The topic group recommends:

- (a) that the present law should be amended so that arrest on mere suspicion of unlawful residence or entry is ended;
- (b) that because of the revelations about virginity tests carried out on Asian women, and the misuse of X-rays, support should be given to the call of the CRE, BCC and others for an independent public inquiry into the conduct and control of the immigration service and the manner in which their considerable discretionary powers are exercised;
- (c) that the bishops should ask the Government to set up an independent inquiry into migration policy as a whole, with a view to framing a new Immigration Act which is non-racist, and respects family unity and human rights.

Carried.

7. CONFIDENCE IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The topic group recommends that the bishops should take note of the widespread concern that exists about the relationship between the police and racial minorities here, and should press for:

- (a) better training in police colleges concerning the multi-racial society;
- (b) reform of complaints procedure against police;
- (c) local effort at deanery level to improve relationships;
- (d) an official public enquiry into the events in Southall on April 23 and 24, 1979;
- (e) an inquiry into the reasons for the St Paul's, Bristol, riot in April 1980;
- (f) the repeal of the 'Sus' law (Vagrancy Act 1824).

In addition, the Church should support the appointment of more magistrates from minority groups, and the provision of special training for all magistrates in multi-racial areas.

It is essential for peace in our whole community that everyone, of whatever racial or ethnic origin, should feel confident in the impartial and equal administration of the law.

Carried.

In the sector meeting, this report was endorsed by 264 delegates, not accepted by 1 delegate and 2 abstained.

SECTOR G — TOPIC 2

PRISONERS

Chairperson: Dr Dorothy Berridge

'Visiting the sick and imprisoned' is no longer the hazard to health that it was in the days of Christ, or even in the days of those Quaker pioneers of prison reform, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry. The hazard in our case is that we, like them, will be stung into action, impelled to question, to widen our knowledge, and even become more actively involved in the apostolate of the prison. Many delegates found themselves allocated to this topic against their stated preferences; but as a result of their preparatory reading and visits to one of our overcrowded prisons, or even of the discussions held during these past two days, they have found themselves deeply concerned at the reality of the problems that have been exposed, and eager to work towards a solution.

Many of the issues raised, including the resolutions put forward and agreed upon, need far more informed discussion than was possible in the

crowded weekend available to us. We are only too aware of the inadequacy of our knowledge, both of the problems and of the solutions we seek; but many of us wish to become more actively involved at one level or another, in helping forward the cause of justice in this all too neglected area of concern.

We wish to commit ourselves more deeply to this special apostolate, and to the further exploration of ways of implementing the resolutions we set out below. We hope that the impetus we have found at this Congress will not be lost, and that a permanent standing committee may be set up to unite and extend the organisations already involved in the name of the Church.

We are also aware that our resolutions overlap with other topics covered within the justice sector and with other sectors within the Congress as a whole. In particular, we would wish to join forces with the groups discussing marriage, evangelisation and civic and public life. Within our own sector, we see shared concerns with the racial justice and human rights groups, and look forward to pooling our views and sharing our common concern for justice.

Recommendations

We call upon our bishops:

1. unequivocally to affirm our commitment to the service of Christ in the persons of the 44,000 or more men and women in our prisons, especially as some 10,000 of these officially call themselves Roman Catholics;
2. to promote informed discussions at every level within the Church about penal issues so that greater awareness and sense of responsibility can develop towards this particular apostolate;
3. to press for an early end to the scandal of prison over-crowding;
4. to support the policy that the courts should make less use of custodial sentences;
5. to support and encourage those already involved professionally within the penal system, and to encourage more Catholics to consider the special vocation of work as magistrates, as members of the prison or probation and after care services, of the official boards of visitors, as well as voluntary prison visitors and catechists;
6. to extend financial support for those prison-related agencies already at work, such as the Catholic Social Services for Prisoners, the societies

of St Vincent de Paul, St Dismas and St Martin of Tours; and to see how these can best be co-ordinated and extended at a national, diocesan and parish or deanery level;

7. to be alert to possible infringements of civil and personal liberties within the prison and penal systems, and when these are known to have occurred, to support those who are working towards greater justice in this sensitive area of human rights;
 8. in particular, we call for a reconsideration of the role and function of the prison chaplains' service, and to consider the possibility of a pastoral service independent of the Home Office and no longer bound by the requirements of the Official Secrets Acts;
- Not carried.
9. to give higher priority to the training and allocation of priests for the prison chaplaincy service: to examine the role of the diaconate in relation to prison chaplaincies and to ask the Council of Major Religious Superiors to consider releasing suitable religious (both men and women) for this apostolate; and to train suitable lay people as chaplains' aides;
 10. to call for priority to be given to the alternatives to custodial sentences for juvenile offenders and to call for fuller implementation of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act.

We call upon each diocese:

11. to re-examine its apostolate to the prisons, borstals and detention and remand centres in its own area, and to set up diocesan and deanery teams to support and extend this work whenever necessary;
12. to investigate practical ways of providing alternatives to prison, particularly for those who are alcoholics, mentally ill, homeless or inadequate; this is particularly urgent at a time when crucial services are being cut back. But at a time when so many individuals are becoming unemployed or offered early retirement, and when diocesan buildings are becoming vacant in many areas, it has become more feasible to use such resources in new and creative ways.

We call upon each parish or deanery:

13. to examine the penal system in its own area, and to explore new and creative ways of becoming more involved in the pastoral care of prisoners;
14. to be particularly alert to the needs of the prisoners' families, and to co-ordinate sensitive and practical ways of supporting them through this vulnerable period;
15. to recognise their Christian duty to welcome and accept an ex-offender into the local community. It is also recommended that

accommodation should be established in all parishes which can be used by released prisoners with no home address;

16. to show care and concern for the victims of crime.

We call upon our fellow-Catholics:

17. to inform themselves about the serious problems within the prison system, and about the work of groups and individuals already involved indirectly contribute to the growing number of criminal offences;
18. to examine in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation their personal attitudes to offenders, 'not only during their sentence but on their return to the community;
19. to work for greater justice within the local community, and as far as possible to tackle the many social problems which directly or indirectly contribute to the growing number of criminal offences.
20. to ensure that these matters are brought to the apostolic attention of young people in our schools and colleges in addition to the awareness already being fostered.

Where voting details are not given, these recommendations were carried by large majorities in the topic meeting. At the sector meeting, this report was endorsed by 237 delegates, not accepted by 7 and 18 abstained.

SECTOR G — TOPIC 3

PEACE, DEFENCE, DISARMAMENT

Chairman: Fr Oliver McTernan

I. PEACE EDUCATION

We recognise that throughout the Church there is a lack of awareness of both the moral and practical implications of peace, defence and disarmament. The need, therefore, to promote peace education at every level was accepted unanimously. It was generally agreed that peace means more than the absence of war. It involved working to eliminate injustice, the cause of conflict.

Recommendations

1. The hierarchy should ensure that Peace Sunday becomes a major annual event, liturgically and educationally, in the life of cathedrals and parish churches.

2. The hierarchy should establish a justice and peace commission in every diocese, and make the funding available to staff these commissions, including at least one full-time member.
3. The hierarchy should institute a national collection to be taken on Peace Sunday to raise funds for peace organisations approved by the hierarchy.
4. The Catholic Fund for Overseas Development should be required to include substantial information about disarmament initiatives, the arms race and the arms trade in its development education programme, since the arms race is one of the major causes of world poverty.
5. The hierarchy, as a result of this Congress, should endow a 1980 Congress peace scholarship, such as at the Bradford University school of peace studies, for a student, possibly from a Third World country.
6. Headteachers and careers advisers in secondary schools should also make available to young people information about job opportunities in non-violent, socially constructive organisations, and encourage visits from peace organisations.
7. Catholic educational authorities should ensure that in schools, seminaries and colleges of education, there is serious study of the arms race, non-violent resolution of conflict, and the teaching of the Church on peace and war.

II. MORALITY OF WAR

Most were agreed that while a country was entitled to a system of self-defence, it is very difficult, in the concrete, to justify any war on moral grounds, and completely impossible to justify nuclear war. All were agreed on the horrors and evil of nuclear weapons. Although some argued a case in support of a legitimate tactical use of such weapons, it was the majority opinion that both their possession and use must be condemned. The call for multilateral disarmament was supported by most, though some argued in favour of unilateral action.

Recommendations

1. The hierarchy should support nuclear disarmament in principle, and urge that governments work towards unilateral nuclear disarmament.
2. The hierarchy should issue a statement supporting the British Council of Churches resolution of November 1979 which declared that the British strategic nuclear weapon system should not be renewed.

3. The hierarchy should oppose the introduction into this country of American nuclear Cruise Missiles, and any other escalation of the nuclear arms race by NATO or the Warsaw Pact.
4. The hierarchy should initiate a study into the morality of the just war in the nuclear age.

III. CREDIBLE NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES

The credibility of the non-violent alternative was discussed at some length. It was generally accepted that there was a need for greater research into this field of action.

Recommendations

1. The topic group advocates a study by the Church of non-violent alternatives to war.
2. This topic group endorses the right of individuals to be conscientious objectors, regarding this as a basic human right.

IV. ARMS TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

It was generally recognised that there should be more serious attempts made to reduce and eventually eliminate the causes of friction. The importance of the peace-keeping role of the United Nations was stressed by delegates. The arms trade was also strongly criticised.

Recommendations

1. The hierarchy should express our concern at the scale and irresponsibility of the arms trade, and urge its reduction and eventual elimination.
2. This topic group strongly believes in the need for international control of arms production and use.
3. The hierarchy should emphatically urge support for the United Nations, its peace keeping role and attempts to promote detente.
4. In view of the present world crisis, we urge the hierarchy to invite the Pope to call a summit of world leaders in order to promote the cause of world peace.
5. This topic group believes that massive inequalities and injustices in the world are a major source of conflict. It therefore urges the hierarchy

to proclaim clearly the Church's deep concern for the poor and its commitment to changing unjust social structures within this country and between nations.

6. In order that its voice should be heard clearly, this group calls on Catholics to adopt simpler life-styles in order to contribute more to all poor, deprived and oppressed peoples.
7. This topic group urges the hierarchy to provide a realistic funding for research into the problems of changing structures and institutions which are the cause of injustice and violence.

All these recommendations were accepted by majorities in the topic meeting. At the sector meeting, this report was endorsed in general by 228 delegates, not accepted by 6 and 35 abstained.

SECTOR G — TOPIC 4

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AT HOME

Chairman: Mr James Pitt

When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well, he recognises in himself a real need for something to drink. He enabled an unknown human being to make a response. Their interaction broke through the apartheid system under which they both lived, and allowed two distinct human beings to grow in knowledge and love for each other. The Samaritan woman was then led by the befriending Spirit to reveal Jesus to others.

This personal conversion is at the very centre of our growth as followers of Jesus Christ.

'But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by baptism and by lives lived according to the gospel. The purpose of evangelisation is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence, the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelises when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieux which are theirs' (Paul VI: *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 18).

Working for human rights and social justice means inviting our fellow humans to turn away from the false values of the world. As Christians we

invite them to look at the world from a new point of view and to be a sign of contradiction to the world's values. This is at the heart of our mission of evangelisation.

Being a sign of contradiction can be painful. We have to make unpopular stands. But we are also a sign of hope.

'Now I am making the whole of creation new'.

Below are many proposals for action, which grow out of our awareness that working for justice is indeed a 'constituent dimension of evangelisation'.

The unborn child is our neighbour.

Christians from the earliest times have condemned abortion, basing their teaching on the Fifth Commandment and the doctrines established by the early Fathers.

This teaching has been reiterated by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, who has described abortion as the denial of the most basic human right — the right to life.

He has confirmed the declaration on abortion of the Sacred Congregation for the Faith which states:

'The first right of the human person is his life. He has other goods, some of which are regarded as more precious, but this one is fundamental, the condition of all others. Hence it must be protected above all others'.

Recommendations

1. (a) A pastoral care office should be established in every deanery in England and Wales.
- (b) The pastoral care office should call upon and use the services of the pro-life and support groups at parish level.
- (c) The local council of churches should be encouraged to join in this caring and sharing exercise.
- (d) The existing pro-life organisations should be given far more support at every level within the Church.

Carried

2. (a) The hierarchy must use their influence with the Catholic Doctors' Guild and Catholic Nurses' Guild to let the doctors and nurses know of their rights, and to support them against discrimination.
- (b) Doctors and nurses should join the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing to fight abortion from inside.
- (c) Social and para-medical workers and other professional persons, e.g., teachers, should also be supported.
- (d) We believe that parents should have the right to know the content and teaching strategy of sex education programmes, and should have the legal right to withdraw their children from the classes. Abortion has helped to create a climate which has facilitated the degradation of sex, of the young, of the role of women and of family life.
- (e) The legal right of the father to protect his unborn child should be enshrined in law, and the bishops and the Church should actively work to change the law.

Carried

3. (a) There must be an improved ministry for the handicapped to help them to achieve their full spiritual and emotional potential as human beings.
- (b) The whole of the people of God should give more help to the parents of the handicapped. The caring people and the relevant organisations should give more support at parish level. The handicapped are our neighbours.
- (c) The killing of the handicapped unborn child has meant that the disregard of the child in the uterus has spilled over into the treatment of the newly born. The people of God condemn and oppose the killing by drugs and starvation of the handicapped babies.
- (d) The people of God must oppose sexist discrimination whereby a child is aborted after tests showing that it is not of the desired sex. Women have a right to support when they refuse tests which are solely for purpose of discovering abnormality, and to refuse to have an abortion if the child is handicapped.
- (e) Communists and black power activists have been amongst those who have attacked the manner in which abortion, contraception and sterilization are being used to manipulate the poor and underprivileged. The Church should take a lead in that senior schools should educate our pupils on the social implications and health problems of abortion, contraception and sterilization.

- (f) Pressures on women include the condemnatory attitude of the 'good' people on the young unaided mothers. In this way the 'good' are responsible for many abortions.

We, as the people of God, should accept them into our homes and our hearts.

Carried

4. Abortion fosters a 'disposable mentality' and creates a 'man-made' problem in that a disproportionate number of the elderly will have to be supported by the young. The people of God must take a far more vigorous stand in opposing the euthanasia lobby, which justifies killing for social and economic reasons.

CONCLUSION

The people of God have not been made to recognise the unborn child as their neighbour. An example of this can be seen in the fact that in two years' preparation for the Congress virtually no facilities were originally available for the discussion of abortion or of the development from it, infanticide and euthanasia. Catholics should have no fear in fighting politically or socially for the Church's teaching on the right to life.

We applaud the Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops of England and Wales on abortion and the right to life.

LAW AND ORDER — THE POLICE

We believe that all persons should be free and equal under the law. We believe that as citizens we should uphold the rule of law, properly administered, but that as Christians, we must adhere first to the higher moral law expounded by Christ. This may lead us to disobey actively laws which are manifestly unjust. Many sections of our community mistrust the forces of law and order. An 'us and them' feeling has grown up and the police are sometimes seen as 'enemy'. There is a lack of contact between the police and the community. There are instances where the police have misused their powers, particularly in regard to people held in custody. Many people are unaware of their legal rights and some feel confused and intimidated when they come in contact with the law through the courts. The media sometimes abuse their power by selective reporting of incidents involving the police.

Recommendations

5. Greater contact between the police and the Church. We urge that:

- (a) parish councils should invite community police officers to talk with the parish; deaneries should make contact with their local police stations to discuss and exchange information;
- (b) head teachers should invite police representatives to visit their schools and arrange school visits to police stations and courts;
- (c) Catholic organisations should make their views known to the Law Commission and to other public bodies reviewing matters of law and order;
- (d) individual Christians should intervene when they see the police misusing their powers, by challenging the officer and reporting to his superiors. They should also intervene when they see a police officer being abused and try to reason with those involved.

Carried unanimously

6. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

We urge the bishops to ask the Government to renew its acceptance of the right of the individual to petition the European Commission of Human Rights. This is a matter of urgency as the acceptance period agreed in 1976 ends in January 1981.

Carried unanimously

7. EXPLAINING RIGHTS

We urge the Social Welfare Commission to prepare a booklet explaining in simple language an individual's rights when arrested, and court procedure, and to distribute this through the parishes, schools and youth clubs.

8. MONITORING POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

We urge:

- (a) every deanery to establish an ecumenical committee to investigate independently claims that the police have acted unjustly or misused their powers, especially when they are granted special powers, as under the anti-terrorism legislation; such committees should have the full backing of Church leaders and draw on skills of members of the community.

Carried

- (b) the bishops to establish a national office with at least one full-time worker to encourage and co-ordinate such activity. Funds should be made available through the National Catholic Fund, or by a levy on the diocese.

Not carried

NATIONAL SECURITY

We believe that there is a delicate balance between personal liberties and national security and that the courts, not the executive, should be the arbiter of these rights. We believe that our nation has a right to security, but that our Christianity should transcend national interests. We re-echo the Holy Father's words: 'the law of God stands in judgement over all the reasons of State'. Much information about the individual's activities, beliefs and status is collected and stored by Government and other agencies. Individuals rarely have access to the information on these files. A wide range of information concerning Government activities and spending is not made public, on the grounds that it 'would not be in the interests of national security'.

Recommendations

9. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

We urge individual Christians, parish groups and national organisations to work for the introduction of a freedom of information Act, and for legislation to ensure that individuals have access to the information recorded about them by the state and other agencies.

NORTHERN IRELAND

As Christians we refuse to believe that the problems of Northern Ireland are insoluble. We refuse to abandon hope. We look forward with confidence to a time, in the not too distant future, when it will no longer be necessary for soldiers to be present on our streets. We believe that it is for the people of Northern Ireland themselves to determine their future. However, all Christians and especially our bishops, in their role as pastors and teachers have a responsibility to intensify their efforts to bring people a commitment to Christ in a spirit of reconciliation; to bring the light of Christ's word, not only to questions of violence, but to the wide range of problems facing the communities in Northern Ireland. The problems of Northern

Ireland have existed for hundreds of years; the present conflict is not new. Violence has not solved but has intensified these problems and created new ones. We were deeply divided in our attitudes to the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. The following views were held by different members of the group:

- the British Government should approach the United Nations to send a peace-keeping force to Northern Ireland, and should then withdraw British troops;
- the Government should set a date for the withdrawal of British troops and adhere to it;
- the Government should withdraw troops immediately;
- troops should remain in Northern Ireland until a solution is found to the present problems.

Recommendations

10. THE NEED TO REFLECT

We urge the bishops of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland to convene, jointly with other Church leaders, a major conference on Northern Ireland, in the near future. They should place special emphasis in their discussions at such a conference on the Church's response to the present situation and the need for evangelisation.

Carried unanimously

11. THE NEED FOR INFORMATION

- (a) We urge parishes, deaneries and other appropriate groupings in co-operation with their local Council of Churches, to 'twin' with similar communities in Northern Ireland to exchange visits and to learn from the people of Northern Ireland their situations, hopes and fears.
- (b) We urge head teachers to ensure that pupils are presented with information about the reasons for and the history of the present conflict.

Carried unanimously

12. PASTORAL CARE

We urge the bishops to ensure the adequate pastoral care of soldiers serving in Northern Ireland.

No clear majority

THE RIGHT TO RESPECT

The group saw human rights as connected with human responsibility, the relationships of communication and love which should exist between people.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CHURCH

The organisational structure within the Church should utilise all the talents of the people of God, and this necessitates a close look at the different ministries within the Church.

CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND CONSULTATION

13. (a) We call for co-responsibility between clergy and laity based upon shared discernment, searching for the will of God in the service of the local Church.
- (b) We propose that this governmental structure could be implemented effectively at deanery level by the appointment of a full-time co-ordinator to facilitate communication between clergy and laity, ensuring that no Catholic voice is unheard.
- (c) Our Christian life-style needs reassessment in the light of gospel values. The voice of the poor and powerless is frequently unheard in the Church.
- (d) There is a need for on-going formation and help for retirement for our clergy.
14. We need further information and study on states and processes regarding:
 - (a) the legislation regarding celibacy, marriage and divorce.
 - (b) the system of dispensation from priestly vows.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS

The group recognised the conflict between the desire to extend Christ's love and respect for each individual to the homosexual, and the desire not to abandon the Church's longstanding condemnation of homosexual practice. We acknowledge fear of the homosexual to be an integral part of our social inheritance which contributed to scape-goating, pillorying and ostracisation. The issue is further complicated by the demands of the campaigning homosexual, not so much for pastoral concern as for approval of their homosexual activity.

15. The group recommends that:

- (a) a clear cut distinction be made between, on the one hand, the unavoidable and morally neutral fact of homosexual orientation and, on the other, homosexual activity; this would lessen both fear of and condemnatory attitudes towards homosexual men and women;
- (b) discrimination against homosexuals in different fields of employment (viz., social work, schools) on grounds of their supposed corrupting influence is unjust, and therefore the Church should give an example to society in this regard;
- (c) continuing dialogue, study and positive pastoral support along the lines of the Catholic Social Welfare Commission's document should be actively pursued at all levels of the Church. A continuing revaluation of attitudes is essential.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

16. In view of the fact that Jesus came to liberate women as well as men, the Congress is asked to endorse the teaching of Vatican II against the discrimination of women (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 29) and the Church's acceptance that women can be Doctors of the Church. Taking account of the close connection between teaching and preaching and the importance of the role of preaching in the ministerial priesthood, all levels and structures of the Church should reflect the participation of women in the preaching/ministerial function of the Church.

Carried

17. In order to lessen discrimination in the Church, we recommend:

- (a) the admittance of girls as altar servers;

Carried

- (b) the admittance of girls to choir schools;

Carried

- (c) the consultation of women on issues of morality such as abortion and contraception.

Carried

18. We also recommend

- (a) the involvement of women in the selection and formation of seminary students;

Not carried

- (b) the admittance of women to the ministerial priesthood;

Not carried

- (c) the elimination of sexist language in the liturgy.

Not carried

19. The Church should be involved in counteracting discrimination in the laws of our society, and attitudes which result from them. For example:

- (a) Law and attitudes in the case of rape, inside and outside marriage.
- (b) Implementation of the Equal Pay Act.
- (c) Nursery education.

SCHOOLS

It is essential that Catholic schools are centres of Christian education for children, parents and staff, especially in the light of the Church's heavy financial commitment.

20. *Recommendations*

- (a) Catholic schools should re-examine their organisation, curriculum and educational aims to ensure that they reflect and convey a deep awareness of human rights, social justice, and education for international understanding in accordance with gospel values.
- (b) Peace studies and political studies should be incorporated into the secondary school curriculum.
- (c) While re-affirming the tradition of Catholic education in this country, we applaud (where falling rolls and political disunity demand it) the establishment of ecumenical schools.
- (d) It is desirable that Catholics staff our schools where possible.
- (e) Each person within the school is entitled to a high degree of human dignity and respect.
- (f) All secondary schools urgently require the services of a full-time chaplain, priest, religious or lay.
- (g) Parent-teacher associations should be mandatory where governors, staff and parents meet regularly.
- (h) Staff appointments should be open, and religious should not be accorded preferential treatment in allocation of posts.

- (i) Parity of esteem in scale posts, time allocations, resources, and the ongoing religious education of staff should all be seen as priorities in our Catholic schools.
- (j) Religious with the Church should readdress themselves to the educational problems of the lower socio-economic groupings.
- (k) The appointment of governors and managers should be based on educational experience and Christian commitment. The chairman of governors need not necessarily be the parish priest.

RIGHT TO ECONOMIC SECURITY — POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

There is no right to absolute ownership. Ownership should be dependent on the needs of others. What we should enjoy and promote is stewardship, not ownership. Great emphasis should be placed by the Church in the importance and immense value of a simple lifestyle, which can bring spiritual enrichment. Lack of sharing, misuse of wealth, resources and power, the mad race to have a growth economy, have created a divided society and a vast amorphous, impersonal mass of rejected human beings, namely the poor.

Catholics, who are frequently well-off, do not take the problems of poverty and inequality seriously. There is a minimal amount of compassion left in our society for the poor, even a designed silence on the part of the Church and State to sweep the problem of poverty and inequality under the carpet.

The message of the gospel regarding the poor has been sold for material values and an ever-increasing urgency to acquire status symbols and wealth. We idolise the achievement of becoming conspicuously respectable, to the exclusion of a vast and growing poor sector in our society.

The group was of the opinion that most Catholics have no idea of the needs of the locality; social justice was a 'fringe activity'. The poor are those who are in need of hope. Anything material or spiritual that dehumanises is against the gospel. Ultimately, there is no distinction between spiritual and material poverty — what is important is the dignity of the whole person.

Christians should be a sign of contradiction in the society in which they live, as Christ was in his, scandalising his own society by his involvement with the poor and rejected.

21. EDUCATIONAL

- (a) The whole philosophy and policy of our Catholic educational system should be kept under review by governors/managers and heads/staff so that Christian values are upheld against the subtle influences of secular values, especially in relation to the poor.
- (b) Catholic education leaves many people with no more than a 'cultural Catholicism'. The practical implications of the social teaching of the Church needs to be made more explicit in Catholic schools and parish catechetics.
- (c) There is need for education in the Catholic press to destroy the myth of the 'social security scrounger' (which has the additional effect of reinforcing the conviction that all problems are now dealt with by the welfare state and that the local community has no responsibility).

Carried unanimously

22. ACTION AT LOCAL LEVEL

- (a) Local clergy and educators, including the parish council, should translate the clear statements given by the hierarchy into practical action at the local level.
- (b) The message of the gospel and Vatican II is not being communicated even inside, let alone outside the Catholic community. Active deanery councils are the best level for local education and action and should be encouraged.
- (c) Catholic parishes should reinforce and support neighbourly caring where it already exists; otherwise they should set up good neighbour/street warden schemes.
- (d) Catholics should become involved about the extent of poverty and inherent injustices attached to the problems. They should involve themselves in trying to alleviate suffering and in this way realise the pain of injustice meted out to the poor.
- (e) Individuals feel powerless unless the Church creates a supportive and community drive to fight this scandal in our society which denies the dignity of man.
- (f) In working for justice and human rights, as the disciples of Christ, we must be prepared to express our love for our neighbour in all of the following ways:

- (i) by creating a caring community to help those in need whom we know;
- (ii) by campaigning for political change so as to help whole groups of people in need;
- (iii) by being prepared when necessary to stand in prophetic witness to God's love for the poor as a sign of contradiction to the false values in society.

Carried unanimously

23. ACTION BY THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

The conference of bishops should act as a body to put pressure on the Government to supply resources so that the poor can be aided and there should be support from all levels, parochial and diocesan.

HOUSING

The right to a home befitting the dignity of a human being is one of the most basic of rights. There is a scandalous shortage of housing in Britain, and the voiceless poor and aged are the most common victims of this condition. The appalling conditions under which many young families have to live is an insult to family life and promotes a continuing and ever-increasing cycle of deprivation and degradation. Many young single people have great difficulty in finding accommodation, and are refused council housing in many areas. Nearly 50,000 psychiatric patients could be living outside hospital if housing were available. No Christian can fail to be alarmed by such injustice.

24. ACTION AT A LOCAL LEVEL

- (a) The active deanery pastoral council is the best forum to study and determine housing priorities for the area locally. Appropriate responses, e.g., half-way houses for young people coming out of care, bedsitters for single people, houses for pregnant girls, can then be worked out with the local authorities and housing associations at either the deanery or the parish level.
- (b) Catholics should play a part in local government/tenant/committees/neighbourhood groups to give witness to their concern for the area and help to counter the current sense of powerlessness.

- (c) Catholics should inform themselves of the housing problems in their area. Where necessary, they should put pressure on local government to examine the extent of need of those whose numbers are not known, e.g., the single homeless.
- (d) Dioceses and parishes should examine surplus Church property and if necessary set up a commission to look at conflicting claims for its use.

Carried unanimously

25. ACTION BY THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

The hierarchy should issue a statement calling for housing to receive high priority in allocation of resources.

Carried unanimously

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

With the introduction of new technology into industry and commerce, our society will have to face bleak prospects regarding employment and there are probably many young people who will never have the opportunity to work in their life times. Unless something drastic is done immediately, there could be a tense situation ensuing in the next few years, causing many young people to become depressed and anti-social. Most vulnerable in this field of unemployment are young blacks and Asians. For many people, working for money could become a thing of the past but the possibilities of social and community work could be examined. However, because of generations of cultural conditioning, most men feel belittled by not having paid work.

26. WORK SHARING

- (a) Work sharing should be encouraged. Further study on the implication should be undertaken by the Laity Commission.

Carried unanimously

- (b) A system of two working half the time with the rest made up by a system of 'education for leisure' should be examined.

Carried unanimously

- (c) Overtime should be abolished.

Carried

- (d) There should be a drastic cut in working hours.

Not Carried

EDUCATION

- (a) Catholics frequently have split personalities between their work life and their spiritual life. Catholic education should help them to see the implication of their faith in their daily life at work.

Carried unanimously

- (b) Catholic schools are often too academically based and an 'education for life and leisure' programme should be adopted for those who are not academically talented. There should be a wider range of opportunities within the school.

Carried

- (c) There should be a review of our educational system which is seen as unrealistic in view of future unemployment. A system of compensatory education should be introduced.

Carried

28. LEGISLATION

Laws regarding the employment of the chronically sick and disabled should be implemented.

Carried unanimously

At the sector meeting, this report was endorsed by 193 delegates, not accepted by 7 and 52 abstained.

SECTOR G — TOPIC 5

JUSTICE IN THE THIRD WORLD/HUMAN RIGHTS ABROAD

Chairman: Dr Paul Rogers

On behalf of the Church in England and Wales we feel compelled to begin by placing on record our failure to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fulness in this land. We regret our failure as a Church

to combat the prevailing national mood of insularity and lack of concern for international justice, and the failure to appreciate the urgency of these problems.

We wish humbly to confess this failure to the millions of our sisters and brothers in the Third World, whose sufferings and oppression we have in good part caused and are still causing. May God give us the grace to make an entirely new attempt to face up to the demands of the gospel and to put them into practice in our lives.

We live with joy and optimism in spite of this sad picture, for we know that not only did Christ die and rise again many years ago, but that with his death and resurrection he has struck the chords of human history with a note that goes on ringing across the centuries until the end of time.

He dies today in every prisoner of conscience, in every poor woman who cannot feed her children, in every country that is exploited by unscrupulous commerce or by the powerful who protect their own interest in any way at the expense of ordinary people.

He rises today in every peasant who wins the rights to his land on which to grow food for those he loves, in every unjustly held prisoner who is set free, and in every country that is liberated from the slavery of dependence on those whose only motive is exploitation.

We know too that we have been baptised into his death and resurrection (Rom 8), into the struggle to build up his resurrection on this earth. If we have died with him to sin, we shall also rise with him, and however deficient are our own efforts, however great our failures, yet he will fill up these deficiencies in his own good time, provided we make the attempt.

Our efforts to live as brothers are our efforts to say with integrity 'Our Father'; they are one with our life of prayer, of adoration of the Father, of thanks for the coming of his Son and the redemption of his paschal mystery.

We acknowledge our sinfulness, our need for repentance which we have expressed in the service of reconciliation at the beginning of this Congress. Yet we live with joy, for we are truly the Easter people.

So in our vision of things, we aim at establishing structures in human society which will make real the oneness of the human family living on this planet. Children of the same Father, members of his global village, we must work for the transformation of the structures of this society which prevent so many from living human lives.

We stress the critical need for the Church in this country to commit far more resources to raising the awareness of our people about issues of

international justice and human rights, through work by national groups, in dioceses and in parishes, schools and colleges.

We urge the adoption of more simple and just life-styles and for personal and community commitment to a greater sharing of our common wealth with all humankind.

We pledge ourselves to work vigorously for a major reorientation of our country's priorities away from preparation for war and towards working for peace and development.

We reject the idea of a world economy based on profit alone as unchristian and urge the whole Church to campaign for a radical reform of the international economic system.

We ask the justice sector of this National Pastoral Congress to support the following resolutions.

Recommendations

1. We ask for a renewed and emphatic commitment by the Church to the implementation of the 1971 Synod Declaration concerning justice as being at the heart of the gospel.
2. We call for the Church to devote a much larger share of its resources to raising the awareness of Catholics in this country about issues of international justice and we urge that:
 - (a) the Church should greatly improve the capacity of national groups such as Catholic Institute for International Relations, Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and the Justice and Peace Commission to act as effective research and information agencies, making us more fully aware of issues of international justice, situations of oppression, human rights, violations and the workings of the structures of our society;
 - (b) every diocese should develop a vigorous justice and peace group with adequate financing of full-time staff, and that issues of international justice and human rights should be integral to the life of every parish;
 - (c) issues of international justice and human rights should be introduced or strengthened within the curricula of Catholic schools and colleges. In-service courses for teachers and clergy should include explicit teaching on the nature of our commitment to the poor and oppressed.

3. A world economy based on profit alone exists neither to bring employment to Third World countries, to transfer technology and expertise, nor to sell in order to meet real needs. We urge that the Church should do everything possible to campaign for radical changes in the international economic system based on Christian principles.
4. Recognising the immense resources which are wasted on armaments expenditure, we pledge ourselves, and urge the Church, to work for a major re-orientation of our country's priorities away from preparation for war and towards working for peace and development.
5. We believe that the Church must, at every level, seek through both prayer and action to bring about recognition of basic human rights as expressed in Church documents and in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, especially with regard to all prisoners of conscience and with particular concern for those persecuted for their faith, or for their work for social justice and human rights.
6. In order to give personal Christian witness we call for a sincere examination of our way of living, and for clergy, religious and lay people to foster by example the adoption of a simple and more just lifestyle.
 - (a) We call on each parish in England and Wales to review in conscience its financial position and to commit a just share of its resources for Third World development, and we call for a similar commitment from individual Christians.
 - (b) We condemn the government's reductions in our overseas development programme and call on it to meet the United Nations' development assistance targets.

These recommendations won the acceptance of the topic group. At the sector meeting this report was endorsed by 232 delegates, 11 abstained.

G. — JUSTICE

1. ON behalf of the Church in England and Wales, we in the Justice Sector of the National Pastoral Congress feel compelled to begin by placing on record our failure to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness in this land. We regret our failure as a Church to combat the prevailing national mood of insularity, to identify with the poor in our midst and to work vigorously for a more peaceful world. Above all we regret our failure to make our own the declaration of the 1971 Synod on *Justice in the Modern World* which proclaimed that:

'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel'.

2. We wish humbly to confess this failure to the poor who live amongst us in England and Wales and to the millions of our sisters and brothers in the Third World whose sufferings and oppression we have in good part caused and are still causing. May God give us the grace to make an entirely new attempt to face up to the demands of the Gospel and to put them into practice in our lives.
3. In spite of this sad picture we live with joy and hope for we know that not only did Christ die and rise again many years ago but that with his death and resurrection he has struck the chords of human history with a note that goes on ringing across the centuries until the end of time.
4. He dies today in every prisoner of conscience, in every woman who cannot feed her children, in all those who suffer in Northern Ireland, and in those whose racial origins place them at the margin of our society.
5. He rises today in every peasant who wins the right to land on which to grow food for those he loves, in every person unjustly imprisoned who is set free, in all the unborn children whose right to live is protected, in all those who are liberated from the glitter of the con-

sumer society, and in every country whose people win the struggle for self-determination.

6. We know too that we have been baptised into his death and resurrection and into the struggle to build up his resurrection on this earth. If we have died with him to sin, we shall also rise with him, and however deficient our own efforts, however great our failures, he will make good these deficiencies in his own time, provided that we co-operate.
7. Our efforts to live as sisters and brothers are our efforts to say with integrity 'Our Father'; they are one with our life of prayer, of adoration of the Father, of thanks for the coming of his Son and the redemption through his paschal mystery. Despite our need for repentance which we expressed in the Service of Reconciliation at the beginning of this Congress, we live with joy for we are truly the Easter People.
8. This vision of confidence and hope is one which has sustained us throughout our discussions this weekend. Together we have tried to see how we can become the 'loving, caring, praying and worshipping Body that Christ intends his Church to be'. Indeed with each area of the agenda we have striven to discover 'how Christ speaks to us and how we, both as individuals and as a Church, should live and pursue our mission in the world to which we are sent'.
9. The five topics which faced us were vast: Justice in the Third World, Justice at Home, Racial Justice, Prisoners, Peace, Defence and Disarmament, and no summary can be fair to the range of issues covered, or the openness with which they were debated (despite the inevitable frustrations of limited time) Indeed on Sunday one of our topics alone had 87 recommendations! However, our participants showed incredible patience, insight and commitment and we would like to share particularly with you on this very special occasion the following aspects. (Wherever possible we have attempted to identify the group to whom a particular recommendation is addressed, although we are deeply conscious of our communal membership of the one Church.)

RACIAL JUSTICE

10. This group strongly affirms that 'we must recognise the fundamental human dignity of each individual . . . but particularly for the minority communities in our midst and for those who are vulnerable or insecure. Those who already enjoy a life of peace and security should endeavour

to share these blessings with others'. This quotation is from a courageous statement already issued by the Bishops of England Wales in July 1978 on the question of the revision of British Nationality Law. It is the keynote for the whole Church's commitment to racial justice. As the quotation continued, 'Britain has become irreversibly a multi-racial, multi-cultural society'. We must as a Church reflect this in parish life by the way in which we consult and include black Catholics and indeed the wider black community.

11. The bishops' statement was applauded by the sector. The sector also reiterated a call for the Church's condemnation of the National Front and other similar racist organisations, and what is more, agreed that membership of the Church is incompatible with membership of those organisations.

PRISONERS

12. This topic group wishes to commit itself more deeply to the special apostolate of the prisons and to affirm unequivocally its commitment to the service of Christ in the person of the 45,000 men and women in our penal establishments. At least 10,000 of these register themselves as Roman Catholics. Furthermore a large majority of the topic group pressed for an early end to the scandal of overcrowded prisons. It declared that no one should be complacent about this and strongly supported the policy that the courts should make less use of custodial sentences. They were also concerned that we should all be alert to possible infringements of civil and personal liberties within the prison and penal systems, and when these are known to have occurred to support those who are working towards greater justice in this sensitive area of human rights.
13. On a more practical level it was urged that local churches, both at diocesan and parish level, investigate ways of providing alternatives to prison. This is a particular need for those who are alcoholic, mentally ill, homeless or inadequate. The group felt strongly that we should all examine our personal attitude to offenders and their families in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

THIRD WORLD

14. The vision of a society which would make real the oneness of the human family, children of the same Father, was the inspiration of this topic group. The delegates felt that we must all strive for the transformation of the structures of our world which prevent so many of our sisters and brothers from living fully human lives.

15. They felt that there was an urgent need for the Church in this country to commit far more resources to raising awareness about international justice and human rights through the creation of an effective network of national and local Justice and Peace Groups who would work through parishes, schools, colleges and other bodies.
16. We are only too aware that few of us have a proper appreciation of the size of the sacrifices which are required of us individually and as a nation if we are to demonstrate the sincerity of our commitment to the Third World. There is no possibility that we, the rich nations, can maintain our present standard of living for much longer. As Christians we must be prepared to deny ourselves many of the luxuries we now take for granted. Perhaps we too, like the early Christians, should be known and recognised by our generosity and our sharing.

PEACE, DEFENCE, DISARMAMENT

17. These issues are obviously of crucial importance in today's world. The great majority of the sector agreed that while a country was entitled to a system of self-defence, it is very difficult to justify any war on moral grounds and completely impossible to justify nuclear war. Everyone agreed about the horror and evil of nuclear weapons, and although some argued a case in support of a legitimate tactical use of such weapons, it was the opinion of the majority that both their possession and use must be condemned. The call for multilateral disarmament was supported by the vast majority, although some argued in favour of unilateral action.
18. It was accepted that peace means more than the absence of war and involves working to eliminate the causes of conflict. The search for credible non-violent alternatives was stressed as a matter of urgency and the right of individuals to be conscientious objectors was endorsed.
19. The delegates were aware of the apathy which exists in many parts of the Catholic community towards these issues, so several practical recommendations on peace education were made. Furthermore the scale and irresponsibility of the arms trade was strongly criticised and a call for its reduction and eventual elimination had overwhelming support.
20. Finally, in view of the present world crisis we urge our bishops to invite the Pope to call for a summit meeting of world leaders in order to promote the cause of peace.

21. Those considering this topic had a mammoth task. But the underlying theme running through the discussions was our responsibility to invite our fellow humans to turn away from false values and look at the world from a new point of view. This means being a sign of contradiction to the world's values. It can be painful. We have to take unpopular stands. But we are also a sign of hope.
22. Indeed one of the clearest signs of hope was the wide range of issues now seen clearly to be part of our Christian responsibility if we are to be true to the Gospel. These included: housing, unemployment, human rights in the Church, discrimination against women, discrimination against homosexuals, abortion, euthanasia, law and order, Catholic schools and many others. In one sense it was a frustrating task trying to give any measured consideration to a range of topics of such importance but the recurring theme was that as Christians our responsibility was to the poor and powerless. In the words of one group report: 'We do not take the poor seriously. We have sold the Gospel for material values. We idolise the value of becoming conspicuously respectable to the exclusion of the vast growing sector of the poor in our society'.
23. Needless to say, one particular area of concern was Northern Ireland, where over 2,000 people have been killed in the past decade and 20,000 injured. Once again one must look at the deeper causes of this, and the delegates made a strong appeal to the bishops of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland to convene jointly with other Church leaders a major conference on Northern Ireland in the near future.

Conclusion

24. All we have said is based upon two fundamental theological principles: firstly, the principle that we must hear the Word of God addressed to us in the experience of our sisters and brothers in the world, and for us this means above all the powerless. And, secondly, the principle that we are a people who believe in a God who has revealed himself in relationships. We end this report by briefly reflecting upon these two principles.
25. It is so important that we accept that the agenda for apostolic action in the areas of social concern be written by the powerless of this world. This means we must hear the Word of God addressed to us in their struggles, their hopes and their sorrows. We must not invent problems;

we must rather face problems. So we have heard the Word of God in the Gospel and in each other's faith. But we have heard it in those who are perverted by false values, those who live in sub-human conditions, those who suffer discrimination, those who are imprisoned, naked, sick — all those who are unprotected in a world which has foolishly walked on the moon and yet let its own planet slip through its fingers. This is the world we have heard speaking to us. It is for us the Word of God with all its ambiguities. We wish to translate our hearing into action.

26. And deeper still, we are a people who believe in a God of relationships. The Father, Son and Spirit have in a creative love released upon this world their image. The image of God is an image of relationships. Relationships are not, however, born; they are fashioned. This fashioning is a hard task, demanding commitment and sacrifice. But only if this web of relationships is built up shall we move to a world of peace. Relationships are not merely personal; they are manifested in our institutions.
27. What relationships are will determine the nature of our institutions and the structures in society. So we commit ourselves to an action which will lead to equality, brotherhood and justice. We commit ourselves to an action which will change the nature of power in our society and in the world. In a word, we seek to build a world which will truly reflect the image of God, where power is shared and realised in a committed love.

CLOSING DECLARATION

*Closing Declaration from Congress delivered by Cardinal Basil Hume in the
Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, May 6, 1980*

'Jesus Christ is the Risen Lord. He is for all of us the Way to Salvation, the Truth that never fails and the Life that lasts for eternity. We reaffirm our belief that we belong to his Church and are united to him through baptism, the sacraments and in our life of prayer. In him we are at one with all redeemed humanity.

During the past few days we have tried to represent faithfully our Church in England and Wales at this National Pastoral Congress in Liverpool. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we have shared freely with each other our hopes and our anxieties and we have together sought the will of God.

As we prepare now to return to our dioceses and parishes, we give thanks to God that he has helped us to reflect more deeply on our commitment to Jesus Christ and on the practical implications of that commitment in every aspect of our life in society today.

And so we, the National Pastoral Congress, conscious of our unity with the Vicar of Christ, Pope John Paul II, with the entire Catholic Church throughout the world, and in the presence of Jesus Christ, hereby declare our agreed determination to follow his way more faithfully, to grasp his truth more purposefully and to live his life more consciously.

We believe that each human being is of infinite value in the eyes of God; each individual created and redeemed; each individual with an eternal destiny. We profess together in Congress that all mankind, loved by God without limit, must be loved and served by us who glory in the name of Christian.

We accept and give thanks for the wealth of gifts lavished upon us by the Holy Spirit. We recognise that each of us has a personal calling from God and that together we share in Christ's redeeming mission to the world. And so we commit ourselves to finding ways whereby we can each play our full and distinctive part within the Church's life, worship and action.

We recognise our families as the Church in miniature, the home of faith and love. We recognise the difficulties they face in the world we live in, but we recognise too the great potential their members have to bring Christ to each other and to others as well.

In our young people we see both a source of vitality and hope and a challenge to the adult Church to make our witness meaningful and purposeful.

In the handicapped, the deprived and the rejected, we see the image of Christ crucified, a focus for our love and care, whose needs we must recognise and meet, and from whom we receive a living witness of Christ's passion.

We profess our growing conviction of the need for more profound unity with our fellow Christians and we will continue to search for more effective ways of achieving that unity. We commit ourselves to continuing dialogue with those of other faiths and none, respecting each and inviting all to listen with us to the voice of Jesus Christ.

Our hearts go out to those who for whatever reason have fallen away from the active practice of their religion. We long to welcome them back into the family of the Church.

We pledge our deep commitment to Christ's legacy of peace. We affirm that commitment to justice lies at the heart of Christian witness; that God's justice demands respect and reverence for all human life; that the first concern of Christians must be for the poor of the world, at home and abroad; that Christians must be stewards of creation and not slaves of material possessions; that all human beings, of every class and colour, whether at work or unemployed, in jobs which demean or which fulfil, are individuals of equal worth to God.

We recognise the complexity of these issues and appreciate that there are no easy answers. But we believe that, in and through prayer, we can find that personal conversion of life which leads to the courageous action which is needed.

In our Congress we have acknowledged the debt we owe to Catholics in the past who shaped our rich tradition in the work of education. We recognise our responsibility as a Church to continue that work and we commit ourselves to even greater efforts to provide a life-long education in the faith. In our schools and colleges, in our homes and parishes, we as the Church will try to bring to fulfilment the potential that lies in each person.

We accept God's call to bring the Gospel to our world. We accept the need to proclaim that message more intelligibly and with greater rele-

vance. We recognise that we must proclaim the truth consistently in word and in way of life.

We pledge ourselves to try to deepen our understanding of the real needs of those who are oppressed and suffering in the Third World. We desire to share in whatever way is open to us with our sisters and brothers in these lands.

We were greatly heartened at the start of our Congress by Pope John Paul's words of encouragement, approval, and guidance. We reaffirm our unshakeable devotion to his ministry in the Church and to his person.

We await eagerly the next stage of this great enterprise in shared responsibility and spiritual renewal. We intend to follow in our local situations the signposts set up by this Congress.

Later this summer our bishops will provide us with their response to our recommendations and their guidance for future pastoral action. It will be for them to discern the way forward. In the meantime we will prepare the way by trying to spread the hope and Christian joy which we have found together here in Liverpool.

Now we offer all our work and endeavours to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. With Mary's prayers let us, as God's people on pilgrimage, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

HOMILY OF CARDINAL BASIL HUME
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

*Preached at the closing Mass of the Congress,
Metropolitan Cathedral, May 6, 1980*

We have lived these last few days through a great experience. I have been struck and much encouraged by the atmosphere of friendship, good sense and good humour which has been so evident as we have prayed and worked together. There has been openness and frankness, a sense of buoyancy and optimism, and the will to make this great Congress a success. Thank you for that.

There are bound to be differences of opinion and view, for we live in a complex and difficult period of history; perhaps, in recent years, a note of uncertainty has been sounded here and there. That should not surprise us. We are still working out slowly, at times painfully, the full implications of a Council that was more profound and far-reaching than even those present may have realised.

The Holy Spirit prompts and guides in directions which he himself determines, but which can leave many of us bewildered and apprehensive. God's ways are not our ways. Indeed, it has been no bad thing that we have had to grow to recognise how much we are in need of the help of God, if we are to achieve his will for the Church.

We have discovered, have we not, that there must be a humble and respectful acceptance of each other, as we try to respond as a Church and as individuals to the call from God to renewal, to evangelisation, to justice, to peace, to the reunion of all Christians — in short to the joy and hope of a Church that must be increasingly a light for all the people.

So the pilgrim Church of England and Wales has paused for a moment on its journey through history, and assembled here. Our purpose has been to see whether or not we are on the right way, to discover, that is, whether we are truly disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Saviour. We felt, too, the need to examine many aspects of our

Christian lives to ensure that we are in fact living in accordance with the truth that comes from the Gospel.

And we came here in search of a fresh vigour and a new enthusiasm, so as to show forth more clearly the life of Christ within his Church. We invoked the Holy Spirit. We might have expected that we, too, would have heard the sound of a mighty wind and have seen descending upon our heads tongues of fire. It can be thus, but it is rarely so.

Most often the coming of the Spirit is more akin to the gentle breeze, which refreshes and enables as we toil and sweat, using the gifts and talents given to us by our Father. And yet — I cannot refrain from saying this — his presence has, I believe, been sensed by us all; and in a quite remarkable way.

The Congress has been one part of a great process, a vital and essential part, but only a part; the months of preparation within each diocese were of the first importance, involving many of our people, who though not physically present at the Congress itself, have been, and are, an integral part of it. We have, too, received much from our brethren of other traditions. You came as observers, emerged as contributors and you leave us as cherished friends.

We now move on to the next phase, and we must labour again. It is in your homes, in your parishes, in your religious communities, in different institutions, in places where you work, that the task of renewal and evangelisation must be undertaken. You are, perhaps, not quite clear what to do or where to begin! Do not worry; trust in God's guidance and help; let us at least play our part, and go forward together supporting and encouraging one another:

'Keep Thou my feet I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me'.

Our response to this Congress can be summed up in three words: faith, prayer and action — none sufficient on its own, each incomplete without the others. In every home and in every parish there must be growth in knowledge and understanding of the great truths revealed to us by God himself; prayer, alone and in groups, family prayers and prayerful parishes provide that indispensable context within which we can with greater certainty apply the Word of God to the needs, problems, and aspirations of our contemporary society.

Faith and prayer lead to Christian action, and to the serving of Christ, most especially in God's special friends, the poor, the deprived, the oppressed and the persecuted, abroad in other lands as well as in our own. The experience of mutual help and support, strengthening our faith,

rekindling our hope and inspiring our charity has been very striking during this Congress.

Indeed this Congress has been the prototype of what should take place in each of our parishes — it is the building of true community witnessing to the risen Christ always in our midst.

Our problem is to know how we can communicate to our families and parishes the spirit and atmosphere of these days, and how to awaken in the Catholic community a concern for the issues which have formed our Congress agenda. Time for reflection and prayer are needed, but action cannot be delayed.

Indeed it is a feature of the life of the Church in our country at the present time that so many people, both religious and lay, have dedicated their lives to the service of those in need and are actively at work to bring justice and peace to our troubled and divided society. Many are present with us. We can do much, now, to support them.

The Church is community; it is the people of God, the Body of Christ, the living Temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Within that community each one of us has a role to play and a contribution to make. Christ, our Lord, requires the laity to play an active and full part in the life of the Church under the leadership of their bishops, and this in virtue of the baptism they have received. You, the laity, must share your insights with us, your bishops and priests, and you must collaborate in the apostolate. And what riches you have brought to this Congress, and how much we, your pastors, need to listen to 'the Spirit of truth, who directs the hearts of the faithful', for this, the 'sensus fidelium', is necessary as we explore together the mystery of God and of his unfolding and developing plan for us, his sons and daughters.

We remind ourselves that we must all acknowledge the divine authority given by the Lord himself to him who is the successor of Peter. It was with joy that we received the messages from the Holy Father, and to know that he had welcomed and blessed our Congress. In loyalty and obedience we shall lay before him our hopes and anxieties.

The words of the Gospel today are full of meaning for us: Jesus cried out: 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to me'. We only thirst for you, Lord, because you first thirsted for us. It is because of your love for us that we are called to love you in return. Is not this love at the very heart of our Congress experience. It is this knowledge of the divine love for man that we must spread, a light carried by each one of us back to our homes.

And our love will be true and Christian when it has reverence and respect. It is awe and wonder in the presence of God; deep and generous

concern for all men, women and children, and for the environment which is their home.

And now we are together for the last great act of this Congress — this Mass. We give to God, in humility and confidence, the work that we have done, as we offer the sacrifice of Christ, Our Lord. The Congress hymn will be sung for the last time, and the banners will be taken from this Cathedral and carried home. The Congress will be over; and work begins.



THE EASTER PEOPLE

PART ONE: THE SHARING CHURCH

INITIATIVE IN SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

1. RICH in sign and symbol, the National Pastoral Congress was for those who took part in it an extraordinary experience of what the Church is and a foretaste of what it can grow to be. The immediate preparation for the 1980 Congress in Liverpool had stretched back over two years. It had involved the twenty Catholic dioceses of England and Wales, the Military Vicariate, the religious orders, lay societies and apostolic organisations of the Bishops' Conference and ethnic minority groups. It called for a rekindling of prayer and devotion. It demanded a painstaking discovery and examination of those elements in Catholic life and teaching which most people agreed to be of major importance at this time. It required the careful blending of representatives. All the bishops were there, together with those clergy, religious and lay people, chosen to represent every section of the Catholic community, and also observers from other churches. It seemed that almost all walks of life were present and from every age group. As the delegates assembled in the Metropolitan Cathedral in the evening of Friday May 2, there was a strong sense that here was a gathering together of the People of God.

THE CONGRESS AND THE CHURCH

2. For us bishops there were moments of profound significance in the two great acts of public worship in the Metropolitan Cathedral. One occurred at the opening ceremony and another at the closing Mass of the Congress.
3. The first came as the diocesan banners were borne solemnly into the Cathedral. The choir and congregation sang a moving litany of the saints of England and Wales. There was immediately a sense that present achievement was rooted in ancient fidelity. Each banner,

bearing the name of a diocese and its coat of arms, was followed by the diocesan bishop, flanked by a lay person and a priest. As the banners were placed in a circle around the perimeter of the Cathedral, each bishop and the two other representatives took their places with their diocesan delegation. It was a simple but beautiful image of the unity of a diocese around its bishop, with clergy and laity looking to him as pastor and priest. Each diocese, proud of its identity and drawing strength from its traditions, was yet unmistakably part of a visible whole. The sense of unity was heightened when minutes later there was heard the broadcast voice of Pope John Paul, successor of Peter, inviting us to be 'mindful of the universality of the Church and of the unity in Christ in which we all share'.

4. A second most significant moment came as the concluding Mass of the Congress was drawing to its close on Tuesday, May 6. Cardinal Hume, the chief concelebrant, and all the bishops of England and Wales ringed the circular sanctuary of the Cathedral. We turned outwards towards the assembled delegations and together pronounced the final blessing of the Mass and of the Congress. It was an apt symbol. The circle reminded us of our unity in the college of bishops. At the heart of that unity was the sacrificial altar, the presence of the risen Lord, the source of sacramental life. United in the college, we reached out to and blessed not only the representatives of our own dioceses but the whole Church of England and Wales. And that Church was sacramentally in communion with the universal Church and was being sent out on a mission of witness and service to the whole community.
5. Everyone will retain personal memories of those five days. In the seven Sector Centres located in different parts of Liverpool, the main assembly halls each had an altar with an open lectionary to remind delegates of the Word of God. Each had a lighted Congress Candle to symbolise the presence of the risen Lord. Each had a tapestry depicting Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, to recall to every mind that all discussions began and ended in Christ.
6. There was throughout the centres an acknowledged atmosphere of prayer and open-ness to the Spirit of God, a sense of fellowship and tolerance. The evident joy of the delegates did not disguise their seriousness of intent. Yet their good humour prevented individuals from taking themselves too seriously. Where there was division of opinion, charity and sensitivity remained. Generally, the scene was one of hope and encouragement, but where the delegates experienced anxieties and tensions, they acknowledged these

too and expressed themselves with honesty and humility. In this all were responding to the injunction of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council who urged the laity to 'disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befit children of God and brothers of Christ' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 37).

7. There was Christian hospitality as the Catholic people of Liverpool opened their hearts and homes to the delegates from every part of England and Wales. We worshipped with them on Sunday in their parish churches and we relaxed with them at a variety of social and dramatic events. Each sector saw bishops, ecumenical observers, young and old, laity, religious and clergy, all working together with confidence, trust and determination. It seemed that all were conscious of their proper role, accepted with dignity and pride, and of their responsibility to those who had commissioned them to come to the Congress in their name. This relationship between the different ministries of the Church in action developed happily and confidently as the days went by. Each working day was threaded with opportunity for prayer. The celebration of the eucharist was central to our life throughout the Congress. In our worship and prayer together, in our discussions and debates, in our listening to one another and in our drawing together conclusions and priorities for the future pastoral work of our Church, there was a strong sense of the gathering of a united people of God. So much so that at the closing Mass, Cardinal Hume stated his belief that 'the presence of the Holy Spirit had been sensed by all of us and in a quite remarkable way'.
8. Let it be said that we bishops are glad to have taken a full part collectively and individually with our sisters and brothers in Christ in all the workings of the Congress. Now after further prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and following close joint consultation, we wish, as members of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, to offer our reflections on the Congress and its reports. We speak principally to our own Church but these reflections are also offered to many other Christians who supported us, and indeed, to all our fellow countrymen.
9. In offering these reflections we keep in mind the request made of us by our Holy Father the Pope in his video-message to Congress delegates: 'I ask each of you to meditate on the mystery of the Church and to ponder the marvellous ways in which God's saving power is effected through her. Consider your role in the mission of the Church, whether it be as a priest, deacon, religious or lay person. For each baptised person is called to participate actively in the

Church's mission so that in our day she may make her presence felt in action. Above all, let us realise that the Church is a community of prayer. It is especially in prayer that Jesus unites us to himself in his work of salvation and service'. In responding to the witness and recommendations of the Congress, we are happy to follow this pattern suggested by the words of the Pope.

DISCERNMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

10. We wish to declare our belief that the National Pastoral Congress of England and Wales was a great grace of God to our Church, and now, confident that the Holy Spirit was with us at the National Pastoral Congress — in response to so much generous prayer — we seek to formulate its meaning for the Church in England and Wales. We desire to meditate with you upon that grace of the Holy Spirit which was given to us, to ponder it in our hearts, and to learn from it what the Spirit is saying to our Church.
11. We believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit could be detected in the sense of living unity which we felt with the whole Church and with our Catholic heritage, and in our common purpose. As with our forebears in their day, our task was to bring in our day the Good News of God's everlasting love to men and women of this land. We were uplifted by the thought and the continuing presence of that great host of witnesses and we were inspired by the recollection of their prayers, sacrifices and even life's blood given generously for their faith and ours. But history — and especially God's saving history — does not stand still. His purpose for the world which he has made is ever moving forward. Our sense of unity with the Church of yesterday and today was also straining towards the Church of tomorrow, still unborn of the Spirit, but one with the present and with the past in the mind of Christ. What would it be like, what should it be like? we asked ourselves. What could we do here and now to share in its coming to birth in the hearts of men as Christ would wish it? This common concern for the Church of the future, itself an indication of the presence of the Spirit, led us to look forward carefully, trustingly and hopefully, together.

MODELS OF THE CHURCH

12. In the history of the Church throughout the centuries it is possible to see how at different times Christians have worked to see more

clearly their role in the world and to understand and explain different aspects or doctrines of the faith. In the early Councils, for instance, the Church was at pains to clarify its mind and its belief in the divinity and humanity of Christ, in the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In the 16th century, in the time we know as the Reformation, Christians wrestled mainly with the mysteries of God's grace and our justification. In this century much of our theological reflection and discussion has been devoted to trying to clarify and understand just what is meant by the Church itself. Nearly sixteen years ago, all the bishops of the Church who met in Rome for the Second Vatican Council, produced a long statement on the Church, entitled 'Christ is the Light of all Nations' (*Lumen gentium*). In that document they acknowledge that the Church in all its fulness is a living mystery which is bound up with God's love for mankind and with our varied responses to God's love. 'Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other' (Rom 12:4-5).

13. The mystery of the Church is so rich a divine and human reality that human language finds it impossible to do it justice or to describe it completely. By approaching it from many different points of view it is possible to build up a whole series of comparisons or impressions, or what theologians call 'models' of the Church. None of these is complete or adequate in itself, and if pushed too far can even be misleading or untrue. But when seen together as different facets of the same reality, they can help to lead us into some understanding of the mystery of the Church and how God works through that Church. In his homily during the opening service of the Congress, Archbishop Worlock of Liverpool spoke of the different images used in the Scriptures to make known the true nature of the Church. We may think of the Church as a building, the house of God in which his family dwells as a community of people. But we ourselves, the Archbishop reminded us, are a people not a building: 'a people holding different ministries and tasks but with shared dignity and responsibility. We are dealing with a heavenly kingdom and a personal God, just as we are striving to bring the Good News of the gospel to men, women and children, and not to an anonymous, monochrome, expressionless mankind'.
14. A most telling image of the Church is that of the people of God on pilgrimage through history. In the Old Testament the great prophet of Israel, Jeremiah, gave God's word when he said: 'This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will

write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (Jer 31:33). And in the New Testament this prophecy is seen as fulfilled in the Church when it is described by St Peter as 'a holy nation, God's own people' (1 Pet 2:9). This idea of the Church as a people, founded and protected by God, owing allegiance to him and loyalty to his purpose, is one which is especially attractive and enlightening today in a world grown increasingly sensitive to local, national and political loyalties but whose fraternal responsibilities transcend all man-made boundaries. By referring directly to experience in human society and to human bonds and solidarity, this model of the Church as God's own people helps us to appreciate our close union with him and our shared citizenship with all the baptised.

15. Much that was experienced at the Congress can best be summed up in the simple English word 'sharing'. We shared our prayers, our Christian faith and human experience, our gifts, our thoughts and desires. We also shared our concerns, our worries and our anxieties. The relationship which we shared enabled us also to reconcile differences, because running through all our deliberations and activities there was also sharing in the love of God, in the eucharistic sacrifice of Christ, and in our Christian vocation. That is why we have chosen as the title for this first part of our reflections on the Congress the words 'The Sharing Church'. In this title we include both senses of the idea of sharing. We are offered by God a share in his love, in order that we may share it with each other and with all our fellow men and women. Yet we know also of his genuine acceptance of our share within his work of creation and redemption. This is the mystery of the Sharing Church, which receives in order to give.
16. Another sign that during the Congress we were living as a Sharing Church was the sense of trust in God and in each other which we experienced as his sons and daughters. The command of Christ to his disciples to love one another as he has loved us can find a variety of expressions in ordinary life — in caring for one another, in experiencing respect and affection, in being sensitive to other persons' needs and difficulties. Perhaps the most striking expression of Christian love which emerged from the National Pastoral Congress was that we trusted each other, and listened to one another, as each having something valuable to contribute, each with a unique witness to give. For many it was a new experience in which they matured and grew in dignity. For all it was a recognition of true status and mature responsibility in the Church of Christ. To trust God is to give yourself to him. To trust another person is in a certain

sense to hand yourself over to him or to her. But to be trusted is surely even greater. There is no greater dignity or challenge than to know that one is trusted by God, with all one's weaknesses and strengths, one's limitations and gifts. Since Christ has entrusted his Church to all of us, to live and preach his gospel of justice, love and peace, we are called to deepen our own trust in his Spirit and in each other. It is part of our life as God's people. And we saw something of all this happening at the Congress. Our sharing was rooted in a trust which can only have been a fruit of the Spirit.

17. This sharing and trustful relationship within the Church suggests another aspect of its life and activity. We speak of the 'communion of the faithful'. In English this word 'communion' calls to mind the idea of holy communion and the doctrine of the communion of the saints; and indeed both these elements are included in this aspect, or model of the Church. Tradition refers to the Church as the fellowship of the faithful, and to individuals and churches as being 'in communion' with each other. Communion means sharing something in common, and what is possessed in common by all members of the Church is Christ our Lord, God's gift to mankind. This common possession reaches its supreme form in the eucharist, but in all the activities of the faithful it is this shared communion with the Lord which makes his Church itself a communion or, as the Council describes it, 'a communion of life, love and truth' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 9). The centrality of the eucharist in our Congress undoubtedly helped to bring out this sense of 'communion' amongst the delegates. At the same time it heightened the earnestness of our longing for the fulness of unity with our fellow-Christians, who were so strongly represented by the observers from the British Council of Churches. We are grateful to these good friends who entered fully into the discussions and prayer of the Congress and who with great understanding respected the disciplines of our Church, sharing with us the pain of Christian separation in our eucharistic celebrations. Even here, in the conscientious search for truth, the bond of charity was uppermost. The leader of the ecumenical observers described the daily Mass as 'an especial joy'. 'It was a moment of glory and faith' he said 'when Christ was received by those who could receive, as if on behalf of those who could not'.
18. We speak also of the Church as a pilgrim people. As the people of Israel were led by God through the desert on a pilgrimage of faith and trust towards the land he had sworn to give them, so the Church, in continually dying and rising again, follows its crucified and risen Lord on pilgrimage through history towards the heavenly Jerusalem. We are not alone on our pilgrimage of faith. We discern

fellow Christians of other Churches moving in the same direction as ourselves and in the same Spirit as ourselves. We rejoice to recognise them as pilgrim-brothers in Christ, above all united with us in the great bond of baptism into Christ. It is this bond of baptism which runs like a strong recurring theme of hope through so many of the Congress reports. As we greet now our pilgrim-brothers, we pray that our ways to the Lord may soon converge, that keeping our vision fixed steadily on Christ, we may move ahead together to our final union with our one Lord.

19. At the opening of the Congress in Liverpool, we were reminded how Pope Paul VI, in his great endeavours to implement the Church's call to renewal, used to say that the Church is not just *in* the world, it also exists *for* the world. We are summoned to worship the God of love with our fellow-creatures. We are also called to witness to God's truth in circumstances which often seem far removed from his will and which are a challenge to the values we associate with his Son. This has been so throughout the history of Christianity but never more so than today when the working and living conditions of so many millions are an affront to human rights and dignity, and when affluence and apathy or indifference go hand in hand in the West, whilst the greater part of the world struggles in face of poverty and hunger. We have to show mankind that justice, love and peace can exist amongst men and women on this earth. We have to stand firm on Christian moral principles as the value of even human life itself comes under challenge. This is the 'prophetic' role of the Church, as it calls attention to the moral demands of the gospel and points the way forward to God's kingdom when those who form public opinion seem to lose vision of man's dignity and eternal destiny. This is as true for individual members of the faithful as it is for the official voice of the Church as a whole. It applies to all of us. In whatever ministry or calling is ours, in the secularity of the role of the laity, as in the hidden life of the contemplative, we give living witness to our beliefs, as we beg our fellow men and women to open their lives also to the healing and saving word of God in Christ. In this we present the model of the Church as a sacrament, a living, visible and effective sign to all men of our shared humanity and of mankind's union with God. At the same time it is an invitation and an inspiration to others to work for the union of all hearts and minds in the Spirit of the living God.
20. It is nevertheless right that we acknowledge that even so rich and biblical an image of the Church as 'the people of God' can be taken in a too literal or even political way. In former centuries, when European nations and other parts of the world were struggling

towards political identity, the idea was also developed of the Church as a perfect visible society in this world, serving the spiritual needs of its members, and seen in contrast to secular societies concerned with temporal goals. It is this particular aspect which leads people to refer to the 'institutional' Church, with its own legal system and central administration. There is great strength and power for good in this aspect of the Church which Christ instituted. Its universality is invaluable in the preservation of unity in faith and in fidelity to the teaching of the gospel. Its international character and its political independence serve to promote and safeguard local missions and Churches in even unwelcoming parts of the world. Its spiritual resources inspire millions of individuals in their Christian living. Yet there is always the fear that too complex an institution may seem impersonal and remote. Modern means of communication and above all the personality and leadership of successive recent Popes have helped to lessen this danger. The new emphasis on collegiality indicates a world-wide sharing by the bishops of responsibility for the entire Church. The recognition and exercise of legitimate local responsibility does not destroy the bond of the local Church with the universal Church. Stress on our role as the one people of God has helped us to understand that, without dispensing with the need for unifying structures, Christ's Church is so much more than just an international institution.

21. To be numbered amongst God's people should confer on each baptised individual a sense of belonging and of personal identity, of dignity and purpose. It also confers on each a fundamental equality and the shared vocation to worship and work together in society in a collaboration which befits God's people. This is in no sense a democratisation nor is it a refusal to acknowledge differences of graces, gifts, functions and ministries within the hierarchical Church, as we explain later. Such differences enable us to build upon what we possess in common by virtue of our shared baptism in Christ and our citizenship in the people of God. This was undoubtedly the general experience in the Congress, where those holding distinct ministries all contributed to the praying, thinking and working of our Church.
22. Membership of Christ's Mystical Body is not an exclusive thing. We are not to be seen as a Church of the élite. As members of that Body we recognise its wounds; we acknowledge our human weakness, failings and sinfulness. The Congress itself began with a Service of Reconciliation; it was a heartfelt recognition that each individual stands in need of God's forgiveness. It was also an acknowledgement that sin and human pride have created divisions

and conflict among individuals and between groups. Even shared baptism and citizenship of the people of God have not prevented separation and bitterness among Christians. We have also to admit with sorrow that we are all sinners, even if we rejoice in the fact that the Church is holy. This characteristic holiness in no way excludes from the Church those whose actions often fall short of the Christian ideal. In God's field, the wheat and the cockle grow side by side. God's net trawls for the good, the bad, the indifferent. There are many who experience, and suffer from, a sense of inadequacy and indeed of sinfulness in their lives. Discouragement and despondency may lead them to think that they are 'marginal' or unacceptable members of the Christian community. Yet the Church must always be for sinners. While it always calls them to repentance, it remains always compassionate, understanding and encouraging. In all that it does, in its life of prayer and witness, in its discipline and its demands, the Church must have regard for the frailty and failure which people so often experience. The Church must reflect at all times the mind of Jesus Christ when he said 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: "What I want is mercy, not sacrifice". And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners' (Mt 9:12, 13).

23. There is just one more model of the Church which has had prominence in recent years and which was of significance in the spirit and content of the Congress. This is the idea of the Church as a family, with its stress on the unity, love and mutual acceptance which are seen as central to family life. These are qualities which should also find expression in our relationships and ties with each other within the household of our faith. If we are really to commend this model of the Church as a family, and to experience life in the Church as in a family — and not just conveniently to play with words — then we have to recognise the vital importance of the family as an almost indispensable cradle of genuinely human relationships in society and also in the Church. These human relationships themselves reflect our relationships with God and even in some sense reflect the life of God himself.
24. Our God is a God-in-relationship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and therefore a God who of his very nature shares his life and love. That is what we mean when we speak in inevitably human terms about the central mystery of the Blessed Trinity as a mystery of three persons in one divine nature. We are considering the life of God himself as one of continual loving relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. We who are the family of the Church, sharing in

different ways responsibility for the quality of its life and mission, are called upon to reflect in our own relationships the divine self-giving and love of the Blessed Trinity. This is the real dimension of the family of the Church.

25. Our tradition, and the Second Vatican Council, both refer to the family as 'the domestic Church'. The mutual love between God and man, and between Christ and the Church, are likened to the love of husbands and wives and of parents and children for each other. Such comparisons stress that the human good qualities created by God and deriving from family life should also radiate into our lives in the family of God and in the human family of mankind. They offer an attractive vision. But they are also a challenge to every family as the source of primary human relationships which are of fundamental importance in themselves. The significance of this model of the Church is best appreciated in the overwhelming expression of concern for the quality of family life today as evidenced before and during the Congress, and in the preparations for the forthcoming Synod of Bishops.
26. These, then, are various features of the Church, many of which were apparent in the National Pastoral Congress, and which, in ways we shall indicate, we should like to see exemplified and developed in more widespread and permanent form in our Church in England and Wales. Our full recognition of ourselves as God's people is our principal concern. We acknowledge that the strength and concentration of our local Catholic communities vary considerably from one part of the country to another. We must have in mind positive directions for the future but we must also have regard for sufficient flexibility to ensure that what is proposed may further the stage of development already reached locally in the process of renewal. We present as an appendix to these reflections on the Congress the outline of a pastoral 'process' which can be taken up at the appropriate point of entry. But at this stage we offer some general observations which we hope will help in spreading the spirit of the Congress. In doing so, we keep in mind certain of our national characteristics which will inevitably colour the manner of the development we desire to see, and which can give particular force to our contribution to the life and work of the universal Church. For the views of local churches must be seen within the *sensus fidelium* of the universal Church. The disciplines and regulations of the universal Church must in turn leave room for the needs, culture, characteristics and responsibilities of the 'particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active' (*Christus Dominus*, n. 11).

DIFFERENT MINISTRIES BUT SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

27. In the light of what we have been considering about the Church we now wish to add something about the various forms of ministry, or service, in the Church, some ordained and some not ordained, but each in its own way sharing responsibility. In the Congress in Liverpool the maturity, strength and apostolic courage of the lay delegates were clearly to be recognised, together with their desire for a more responsible role in the future. We should like to see the lay members of our Church, men and women, young and old, become steadily more aware of their true dignity as the people of God and of their daily calling as baptised Christians to evangelise the society in which they live and work. Their role brings out an essential dimension of the work of the Church, an extension of Christ's kingdom to wherever they are in God's creation. For they are not simply delegates of the bishops and clergy, they are gospel-inspired lay-people, members of the *laos* (or people) of God, and in their own right missionaries of Christ to the world. 'The primary and immediate task of lay people is to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. The more gospel-inspired lay-people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often buried and suffocated, the more these realities will be at the service of the kingdom of God and therefore of salvation in Jesus Christ' (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 70). In many ways the lay contribution to the Congress was its most striking feature. We desire to see its development, not in a spirit of take-over from one ministry or another — any more than was the case in the Congress — but as a proper, fully recognised and responsible extension of the Christian mission of our Sharing Church.
28. We should like to see our religious, both men and women, as outstanding and up-to-date examples of single-minded fidelity to Christ and his Church in all their apostolates, whether contemplative or active, reminding us all by their lives and dedication of the supreme values of God's kingdom. We have the impression that, so natural and easy was their relationship with the other delegates in the various sectors of the Congress, perhaps inadequate attention was drawn to the role religious men and women are already playing in the post-conciliar Church, where their specialised vocation is gradually becoming more integrated within the life of the local dioceses and parishes and in Catholic lay organisations. With due regard for the distinctive nature of their vocation, and for the charism of the Congregation concerned, this involvement in the life and witness of

the local Church as a whole is a process we welcome, just as it was clearly a development which the lay delegates regarded as very important. We hope that as a result of this development our families and indeed the whole local Church will consider ways of encouraging vocations to the religious life. Religious 'should carefully consider that through them, to believers and non-believers alike, the Church truly wishes to give an increasingly clearer revelation of Christ. Through them Christ should be shown contemplating on the mountain, announcing God's kingdom to the multitude, healing the sick and the maimed, turning sinners to wholesome fruit, blessing children, doing good to all and always obeying the will of the Father who sent him' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 46).

29. We should like all who exercise the ordained ministry in the Church, whether as deacon or priest or bishop, to take to heart the example of our divine Master who came to serve, rather than to be served, and who emptied himself in humble service of his brothers and sisters. An ancient and hallowed title of the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, describes him as *servus servorum Dei*, the servant of God's servants. As the Council stated in challenging terms: 'for the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God, Christ the Lord instituted in his Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For those ministers who are endowed with sacred power are servants of their brethren, so that all who are of the people of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, can work toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, and arrive at salvation' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 18).
30. Elsewhere we shall develop the indispensable role of the priest in calling, helping to form and to sustain his lay brothers and sisters in the Church's apostolate to today's society. A recent pamphlet of the National Conference of Priests says: 'No longer can we be in charge of everything. The priest must be for lay apostles, small groups, communities within his care, the one who gives new life, enabling people to work by themselves' (*Set Priests Free to Preach and Pray*, n. 12). But we are convinced that it is in their very collaboration with fully active lay men and women that priests will discover the depth of spirituality in their ministry. Priests are not required of necessity to be expert in all the secular concerns which are the primary sphere of the apostolate of the laity. But lay men and women will expect a priest to help them to set the problems which challenge our lives today within the light of the gospel. It is our belief that the more effective the truly gospel-inspired role of the lay person, the more satisfying the spiritual role and the clearer the ministerial identity of the priest. True

collaboration does not blur distinction between ministries. It clarifies the distinction and shows the ministries to be complementary in the life and mission of the family of the Church.

31. We were happy to witness at the Congress such fruitful collaboration between clergy, religious and laity. The high ideals which the laity held out for their priests were matched by the affection and supportive understanding they showed for them. The clergy showed the same attitude towards their people and every effort must be made to develop ways in which this mutual support and true collaboration can be rendered more effective, especially in the many problems arising today from the fall in the number of priests available for work in the parishes. We recall the words of Pope John Paul II in his first letter to the Priests of the Church: 'Our pastoral activity demands that we should be close to people and all their problems, whether these problems be personal, family or social ones. But it also demands that we should be close to all these problems "in a priestly way". Only then, in the sphere of all these problems, do we remain ourselves. Therefore if we are really of assistance in those human problems — and they are sometimes very difficult ones — then we keep our identity and are faithful to our vocation. With great perspicacity we must seek, together with all men, truth and justice, the true and definitive dimension of which we can only find in the gospel, or rather in Christ himself' (*Maundy Thursday Letter* 1979, n. 7). It is also our intention to study how best the restored order of the permanent diaconate can help in the development of a closer link between the life of priests and the conditions in which many lay people have today to work out their salvation and give witness to the gospel.

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHURCH

32. We appreciate that the widespread collaboration for which we call involves inevitably the development of new types of relationships and attitudes at every level in our Church: attitudes which reflect in an hierarchical order, with respect for distinct ministries and vocations, a genuinely shared responsibility and dignity. Such relationships call for response from individuals as well as communities. To ensure that these attitudes and relationships may always have the opportunity of reaching fulfilment the procedure in achieving them has to be formalised and, as far as human weakness allows, guaranteed in some way. True relationships cannot be achieved merely by order but it is evident that a thorough review of our structures and organisations in the parishes, deaneries and dioceses

will have to be made. Their present state of development is by no means the same everywhere, nor is the degree of active participation by all members of the Church uniform. No one comprehensive blue-print can serve every part of the country. We must all endeavour to study local needs to see what is going to be the best manner of ensuring continuing consultation, shared responsibility and clear direction in the mission of our local Church. We declare our intention to review in our dioceses with our priests and people the ways in which we may have to adjust our thinking and adapt our procedures.

33. We do not wish that such policy for the future — any more than these reflections on the Congress — should be accepted unthinkingly. That could be irresponsible, and the abdication of responsibility can be the height of disloyalty. The latent loyalty and respect for tradition — which is often said to be part of our national character — can render change in attitudes difficult, especially where anything as intimate as religious feeling is concerned, and particularly if the thinking behind the change has not been understood. This is perhaps why, for example, certain changes and developments in the renewal of the Church's liturgy have been for a number of people a test of loyalty and even a cause of unhappiness. Our devotion to our heritage, secured for us at such great cost, may make it difficult for some to appreciate the reason or desirability for change. We must help such people to understand what is being presented to them: to realise that Christ wants Christians committed in mind as well as in heart: and that to encourage such commitment based on understanding is neither disloyalty nor a questioning of authority.
34. It is important, therefore, that we recall the words of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in his message to the Congress, when he offered his congratulations on our 'initiative in shared responsibility' which bore witness 'to the vital mission of all baptised persons in the Church who, in union with the hierarchy and under their direction, are building up the Kingdom of God'. Then the Holy Father went on to say: 'The Holy Spirit is active in enlightening the minds of the faithful with his truth, and in inflaming their hearts with his love. But these insights of faith and this *sensus fidelium* are not independent of the *magisterium* of the Church which is an instrument of the same Holy Spirit and is assisted by him'. We wish to call attention to two points. One is that the Holy Spirit works directly in the hearts and minds of individual Christians. The other is that he works for harmony and balanced inter-dependence between all his chosen instruments. All of us together make up God's people. All our varied gifts and responsibilities must conspire harmoniously in the one Spirit who animates the whole Church. This means

that all can contribute to the authentic expression of divine truth in harmony with the faithful everywhere. Where the content of the faith is concerned, the final judgement, or discernment, will be that of the Church's *magisterium* in identifying the mind of Christ and the wishes of his Spirit. But identifying that mind often requires the contribution of all. As the Second Vatican Council said: 'With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire people of God, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine Word. In this way, revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and set forth to greater advantage' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 44).

35. The experience of the Congress and its results have also led us to reflect more deeply on our identity and function as bishops and on our teaching role in the Church. As we assembled in the cathedral with our diocesan delegations to inaugurate the Congress, we were illustrating by that symbolic act that, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, 'the individual bishop is the visible principle and foundation of unity in his particular church, fashioned after the model of the universal Church' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 23). In the course of sharing in the Congress worship and deliberations, and as an important element of their life and validity, we experienced also the truth that 'bishops govern the churches entrusted to them as the vicars and ambassadors of Christ . . . for they exercise an authority which is proper to them, and are quite correctly called "prelates", heads of the people whom they govern' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 27). In the Congress we found a living indication, especially in the eucharist, of how 'the Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimate local congregations of the faithful which, united with their pastors, are themselves called churches in the New Testament. For in their own locality these are the new people called by God, in the Holy Spirit and in much fulness (cf. 1 Thess 1:5)', (*Lumen gentium*, n. 26).
36. As pastors each of our individual diocesan churches and collectively of God's people in England and Wales, we were conscious of our serious responsibilities not only for, but also to, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and of how sensitive and Christ-like should be the exercise of the God-given authority which has been entrusted directly to us as bishops. We were also encouraged by the generous eagerness of the committed practising Catholics of our countries to respond to our initiatives, and to dedicate to the life and mission of the Church their gifts and talents, their professional knowledge and skills, and their life's experience. We rejoiced to hear them express their Christian minds within the family atmosphere of the Church,

and to take to heart so constructively the explicit recognition by the Council 'that all the faithful, clerical and lay, possess a lawful freedom of enquiry and of thought, and the freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 62). As the Council also explained, 'an individual layman, by reason of the knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the Church' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 37). For our part we believe that in calling and responding to the National Pastoral Congress we are discharging our episcopal duty. Moreover we are acting fully in accord with the letter and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. In our explanation and our teaching in this document we rely heavily upon the theology, the teachings and the authority of that Council, particularly in the vital areas of pastoral leadership and of responsibility properly shared among all the people of God.

37. The teaching of the Second Vatican Council is the major exercise of the *magisterium* of the Catholic Church in this century. Each and all of its documents were ratified by the then Pope, Paul VI. It is therefore a mark of true loyalty to the Church to try to accept that magisterial teaching with Christian and human maturity, to meditate upon it and to pray over it with an unprejudiced desire to be nourished by it. As our present Holy Father wrote in the opening encyclical of his papal ministry: 'what the Spirit said to the Church through the Council of our time, what the Spirit says in this Church to all the Churches cannot lead to anything else — in spite of momentary anxieties — but still more mature solidity of the whole people of God, aware of their salvific mission' (*Redemptor hominis*, n. 3).
38. By virtue of our episcopal consecration, and in the light of the spirit and teaching of that great council of the Church, we the bishops of England and Wales, as vicars of Christ in our dioceses, have the duty and the right to preach the gospel to our people in season and out of season, and always in communion with our fellow-bishops and especially the Bishop of Rome. We have the duty and the right to call upon all, priests and people alike, for a loyal and respectful acceptance of our teaching. In our collegial responsibility for the whole Church we have the duty and the right to share with the Supreme Pastor of the Church and our other brothers in the episcopate the fruits of our episcopal discernment arising from the deliberations which we have together shared with our people. The Church is neither a centre of higher studies nor a debating society. It is, as

we stress in this Message, a 'communion' and a community. Its members throughout the world are bound together by a bond which is even more basic than their obedience. This bond is the grace-given love of God in Christ, and of one another, a love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Church is therefore much more like a family than a political society. But even a family, which without love and mutual acceptance is a hollow mockery, needs some structures, some settled practices, and some forms of authority — an authority which listens, is ready to learn, and in the end may have to take decisions for the sake of the whole family.

39. The universal episcopate can, in moments of supreme importance, exercise its teaching authority or function, its *magisterium*, by an infallible definition of some point of revealed truth. The same is true of the Pope as head of the college of bishops, who can define infallibly even without the active help of an ecumenical council or of the college of bishops. It is to be noted that he bases such a teaching on the sacred tradition and sacred scripture which 'make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church' (*Dei verbum*, n. 10). Infallible definitions, however, are few and far between. The last unmistakable one was in 1950, when Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Our Lady. Meanwhile the Church lives on, and so does the faith. The bishops and the Pope have to teach and guide continuously in response to the changing needs and evolving cultures of the people of God. In fact we must say the *changing* cultures, since the Church is to be found in many very varied cultures differing in place and time. 'Although the bishops, taken individually, do not enjoy the privilege of infallibility, they do, however, proclaim infallibly the doctrine of Christ on the following conditions: namely, when, even though dispersed throughout the world but preserving amongst themselves and with Peter's successor the bond of communion, in their authoritative teaching concerning matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement that a particular teaching is to be held definitively and absolutely' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 25). Sometimes the teaching given, although official, will relate to matters which are not taught infallibly, or not infallibly defined. Such teaching is official, but obviously in principle it can be subject to revision by the *magisterium*.
40. We have explained how we view our identity and teaching role as diocesan bishops of the people of God in England and Wales, each within our particular Church. In addition to this particular aspect of the bishop's function in his local Church, there is also an important universal function, that of belonging to the world-wide 'college' of bishops, of which the Pope, the Bishop of Rome

and successor of St Peter, is the head. As the Council explained, 'in and from such individual churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church. For this reason each individual bishop represents his own church, but all of them together in union with the Pope represent the entire Church joined in the bond of peace, love and unity' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 23). In the college of bishops, 'the bishops, faithfully recognising the primacy and pre-eminence of their head, exercise their own authority for the good of their own faithful, and indeed of the whole Church' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 22). The fruits of our National Pastoral Congress, then, as we discern them, can be seen as a contribution to the whole Catholic Church. As members of the world-wide episcopate we can represent to the college of bishops, and to the Holy Father at its head, the voice of our Church for the good of the whole Church.

41. The fundamental belief of the Church is that the revelation and the faith given to us once and for all in Christ will never be lost, never be reduced to silence. This is because Christ and faith in Christ, and the mandate to proclaim that revelation, are given continuously and ever anew by the living presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. 'And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (Mt 28:20). As the Church of this faith, this revelation, this one Spirit of the living God, the Catholic Church finds its living focus in each legitimate eucharist, in each diocesan bishop, and in the bishops of a nation or region; and again in the universal college of bishops and in its head, the Pope. This is not a simple picture. We are, after all, meditating upon the mystery of the Church. But it is an extraordinarily rich one. It is valid and not self-contradictory only because we are all bound together by grace in a communion of believing, hopeful and dynamic love.

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CHURCH LIFE

42. Amongst God's people, then, there is no place for inaction or isolationism. There is place for giving and for accepting. In other words there is place for sharing with each other the gifts and calls we have all received from the Spirit in order to share together in the mind and will of Christ. In Britain we have a name for being pragmatic and practical rather than speculative or theoretical. We also have a traditional respect for law. But it is a respect firmly founded on principles of equity and fairness: we always react against discrimination, although we do not always recognise it in its early stages because we are apt to assume the rightness of the *status quo*. It seems inevitable and correct that our structures and relationships

will reflect our national characteristics and experience. This means that there may well be room for some variations within our territory and that we should keep open minds about further reorganisation as the relationships we desire to see are themselves developed. We dare to hope that as we, a united people of God, move forward together in mutual trust and respect, we may have a positive contribution to make from our local Churches to the whole Catholic body. As the Council Fathers explained, it is in virtue of the Church's catholicity that 'each individual part of the Church contributes through its special gifts to the good of the other parts and of the whole Church' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 13).

43. Possibly because of our concern with what is correct, our countries also have a reputation for dignified and beautiful ceremonial. Add to that the spontaneity which can come from our pragmatism and there is an interesting basis for our approach to liturgical worship. We have already referred to the splendid liturgies celebrated in the Metropolitan Cathedral which moved the hearts even of those who are better known for their undemonstrativeness. But the attention also given to the smaller and simpler celebrations in the various Sector Centres shows that formal community worship can vary greatly and can include provision for personal or even silent prayer. One does not exclude the other. As individuals we make up communities. Small groups are the constituent elements of larger groups, not a denial of their validity. The dangers of fragmentation are to be understood but in our concern for the development of the Sharing Church, we should not lose sight of the sensitivities of individuals. The Council's insistence upon a liturgy in which all play their proper part is a reflection and a symbol of the active involvement required of the individual Christian in the whole life and mission of the Church. But this is not to ignore a personal relationship with God in prayer and individual response to the mandate given by Christ to his followers to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.
44. In our way of life as God's people there must be freedom and variety, and not constraint, for the individual and for his or her unique response to the Spirit of God. Yet we must remember that 'we are his people and the sheep of his pasture' (Ps 100:3). We share the grace of Christ and our baptism into the Church. We dare not call ourselves Christians and at the same time remain stand-offish or self-centred, least of all in our worship. We need each other and have much to share with each other. The importance of our individuality lies in the unique contribution which each of us has to make in our common worship and mission. It is in this that we

must find the positive balance between our legitimate individuality and privacy, on the one hand, and our sharing to the full in the life and activity of our local Church, on the other. The two need not be in conflict any more than private prayer need be threatened by community worship; or, for that matter, any more than the particular qualities and characteristics of the local Church need be seen as being in conflict with the entire Church. On the contrary, by their very individuality they can complement and enrich the universality of the whole Church.

45. Our Church in England and Wales is generally reckoned abroad to be 'moderate' or 'middle-of-the-road'. In so far as this may ensure the avoidance of extremes and of the polarisation of conflicting positions, it is not a quality to be regretted. Yet none would deny that the path of post-conciliar renewal has caused some painful divisions within our Catholic family. Generally speaking, the sharpness of such divisions tended to disappear amongst the Congress delegates who learned to listen as well as to advance their own views, and to respect the conscientiously-held views of others. Such sensitivity in seeking after the truth is of Christ. Our faith in Christ is, and must be, a great solvent of divisions. The wisdom given to each of the baptised as a gift of the Holy Spirit is a grace to penetrate to the heart of things and not to stop at surface appearances, nor to consider externals as timeless and fixed once and for all. The grace given to our Church at the Congress was one in which deep divisions simply had no place and in which unity in essentials was paramount. When in 1962 Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council, which was aimed at renewal of the Church to help it preach the gospel more effectively in today's world, he reminded the bishops that the substance of our Catholic faith is not the same as the forms in which it finds expression. For our part, we may conclude that our Christian faith and discipleship are not to be identified totally with our various ways and methods of living them at any given period. Christ taught that a scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven brings from his treasure chest new things as well as old. The grace of the Congress was to consolidate and confirm in all our hearts the essential message that God shares his love with us through Jesus Christ, our Way, our Truth and our Life. He invites us to share in communicating that love to each other and to our contemporaries, while at the same time inspiring us to seek ever more effective ways of celebrating and sharing the love of God.

46. We have shown how the Church can be regarded as a sacrament of all humanity. Similarly, in its own way, the National Pastoral Congress can be seen as a kind of sacrament of our Church in

England and Wales. All those who came together in the Congress did so in the name of those who could not be there, and brought together all the shared labours which had gone into the preparations for the Congress. For a few days our Church was, as it were, concentrated at Liverpool. There it prayed and worked and rejoiced in an atmosphere of Christian freedom, joyful faith and of shared responsibility for the future. There, too, it was buoyed up by the prayers and good wishes of so many up and down the land. It achieved a harmony and a vision for the Church which can only have been a grace of the Spirit. That seed of the Spirit must now be planted throughout our Church so that the vision can be shared and spread. We must pray and work for a rich harvest. God will give the increase. We must provide many labourers for the harvest. As Cardinal Hume said at the concluding Mass: 'The Congress itself is over. The work begins'.

PART TWO:

THE CHURCH IN AND FOR THE WORLD

'I ask each of you to meditate on the mystery of the Church and to ponder the marvellous way in which God's saving power is effected through her'.

— POPE JOHN PAUL II to the Congress.

47. Our faith is rooted in mystery, the mystery of God, of Christ and of his Church. A mystery is not an enigma or a puzzle to which we do not know the answer. It is a reality so profound, so inexhaustibly rich, that the human mind and heart can never plumb its depths nor appreciate all its treasures. The National Pastoral Congress succeeded in living, praying and working as a single, visible expression of the mystery of Christ's Church. We can profitably meditate on this mystery in order to learn how God wishes his saving power to be effective through the Church.
48. The seven sectors, working in widely scattered centres throughout Liverpool, still managed to present a remarkably coherent vision of the people of God and its mission in society today. It was another persuasive sign that the Holy Spirit was among us. As your bishops, we were part of the process which produced by the worship and the work of the Congress a striking witness to our contemporary pilgrim Church and which set signposts for its future. Such witness could not be a definitive treatment of what is after all a mystery. Nor do the signposts guide us more than a limited way forward on a journey which will last until the end of time. But now, in the same spirit of prayer and shared responsibility which characterised the Congress, and in response to the Pope's invitation, we wish to further the meditation on the Church by reflecting attentively on the reports from the seven sectors and from the various groups studying the aspects or topics which made up the major themes of the Congress.
49. We gladly acknowledge the generous faith and fidelity which animates these reports. From the wealth of recommendations we wish

to indicate some which we believe to be possible of realisation and the practical steps necessary to achieve this. We wish to foster genuine growth in Christian life and mission and at the same time to avoid the dangers of misplaced emphasis. We hope to indicate also where there is need for further reflection on some aspects of contemporary life which the Congress did not consider. Clearly we cannot offer here reflections on every aspect of the mystery of the Church. Our task is one of spiritual discernment. We want to reflect upon the vision of the Church which was presented by the Congress, to examine its various aspects in the light of the gospel and of the teaching of the universal Church, and in doing so to identify for the Church in England and Wales what we see to be of God. We do not intend to provide a comprehensive legislation or teaching for every area of our Church's life and mission. To attempt to do so would be seriously to misunderstand the enabling and coordinating role of a Bishops' Conference and the kind of spiritual leadership required of it: possibly to override the legitimate freedom and responsibility for mission which are the prerogatives of each individual diocese as a local Church under the pastoral guidance of its bishop: or even to appear to encroach upon the allegiance and love which we owe to the Holy Father and the universal Church. To seek to do more than make such a spiritual assessment of our pastoral needs, and how they may be met, would be to misread the scope and purpose of the consultation and renewal entrusted in a spirit of shared responsibility to the National Pastoral Congress.

50. In meditating on the mystery of the Church, in the light of the reports from the Congress, we intend to lead our people with us on a pilgrimage of faith which will inspire the whole people of God in our lands to renew and deepen their sense of mission, and which will release unsuspected and untapped spiritual energies in the service of the gospel. For we are each called individually and as members of the Church to bring God's saving power to our world. It is a challenge and a responsibility that the local Churches in England and Wales do not accept in isolation. We belong to a Church which is Catholic in reality as well as in name and we share responsibility for its world-wide mission.
51. The seven sectors of the Congress were independent but inter-related. To develop their reflections, we have brought together from all the sectors the material which bears on related topics and we have tried to discover a pattern or inner coherence which will help us to see how our Church lives and acts in today's world.
52. First, we consider how as a people united in baptism we are called to live as a community of prayer and praise through worship: to

live as a Church seeking Christian unity: to become a Church of shared responsibility for evangelisation: to make up the one body of Christ through our different ministries: to find Christ in our relationships with others, especially through marriage and the family: and finally, to improve and develop the appropriate means and structures to help us to live as an apostolic community of faith.

53. Secondly, we wish to draw out and to explore the implication of baptism for all members of the people of God and for their continuing formation in the image of Christ through their developing catechesis and Christian education.
54. Thirdly, we wish to reflect upon how we show the face of Christ to the world: how, as the Pope put it in his message to us, the Church is in our day to 'make her presence felt in action'. We need to think carefully how, as a Church, we become a sacramental sign by the way we live, by our attitudes, by the values to which we witness, and by the service which we give to the world.
55. Fourthly, we wish to draw together a number of reflections about some who are vital to the well-being of the people of God. We wish to speak about the specific contribution of women to society and to the Church. We present a challenge for young people. We have a special message for single people. We give thanks for the life and witness of religious. We desire to share with our brother-priests a renewed understanding of their indispensable role as the chief collaborators in our ministry to the Church. For they are crucial for the task of making real this vision of the Church and for leading the people of God on its pilgrimage of faith.
56. In this way, whilst making our own further contribution to a development of the thought presented at the Congress, we hope to be able, within this general picture, to treat of the various points which were stressed and the recommendations which were made by the delegates. Those recommendations were of differing weight and consequence. Some were of almost local significance, others were of a character which must be judged in the light of the needs and practices of the world-wide Church. Some may be set in motion without delay, some will require further thought and enquiry, some will require the collaboration of others if they are to be given effect. We are conscious that all were offered in that spirit of faith and open-ness with which the whole assembly was greatly blessed. It is our hope that the treatment we give to the proposals in this part of our Message may be seen to contribute to the glory of God and to the better service of his people.

SECTION I: BECOMING AN EASTER PEOPLE

Introduction

57. The twentieth century has seen wars, injustice and a widespread attack on fundamental moral values, but, despite that, it has been an exciting and enriching era in which to live as a Catholic. It has been an age of re-awakening as each generation has developed new tools to unlock the treasures of scriptural knowledge, as the liturgy has been renewed and fresh insights gained into dogmatic truth, moral theology and spirituality. It has seen a deepening of our understanding of the eucharist and a renewal in the significance of sacramental life. It has seen the flowering of ecumenical activity and the insistent search for reunion. It has seen the laity come of age in the Church and find their rightful dignity and calling. It has seen the re-emergence of the Pope not only as the Supreme Pastor of Christianity but also as a prophetic sign of unity and reconciliation in the world. It has seen persecution and heroic resistance and suffering for the faith. It has seen the Church develop its prophetic mission in defence of the powerless and the oppressed. These new energies have been released from a variety of sources, but undoubtedly a major one has been a deeper appreciation among Catholics of the sense of 'Church' and the centrality of the Easter Mystery.
58. The Second Vatican Council was involved, to a remarkable degree, in exploring more profoundly the sacrament of baptism and in rediscovering its fundamental importance for our understanding of the people of God and for our appreciation of Christian living in today's world. Consciously or unconsciously, the National Pastoral Congress was drawn into a similar rediscovery and exploration but in the context of England and Wales. For some the Congress will still be a challenge because it seeks to further the work begun by the Council almost twenty years ago. The truth is that though in certain respects the externals have changed, in many areas there has been relatively little appreciation of the compelling doctrinal and pastoral reasons which motivated such changes. We shall try — even if only briefly — to explain why renewal and development have been called for. We do so with some confidence since, whatever appearances may have been up to this time, the Congress itself provided dramatic proof that in fact seeds have been planted and are producing a harvest.

59. Our persecuted forefathers in the faith recognised that it is the Mass that matters. Catholics in these islands have always preserved that devotion to the sacrifice of the Mass and to the real presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharist. These are mysteries, however, so linked with our most intimate religious experience that many people can think of them only as occasions when they commune personally and individually with their Lord and God. Yet when the Second Vatican Council desired to explore for us the treasures of the Mass, it pointed at once to the fundamental truth that the liturgy is not private but to be shared, not the worship of individuals but the united prayer of a whole people. 'The liturgy is the summit towards which all the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavour is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper'. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 10). It follows therefore that the Mass is the supreme expression of what the Church is and the source of all that the Church does. Through baptism and confirmation all members of the Church, with their distinct ministries, share in the mission entrusted by Christ to his followers. In the same way and for the same reason all members of the Church, again in accordance with their distinct ministries, share in the offering of worship to God and in offering to the Father Christ's one eternal sacrifice of love. This in no way denies the personal and the devotional elements in our worship but emphasises that we find salvation and individual fulfilment through our baptism into the one body of Christ, into the fellowship of the worshipping Church.
60. As always, when we reflect more deeply on the themes of the Congress, we find ourselves thinking about baptism. Because of our baptism we are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God' (1 Pet 2:9). All members of the Church share in the priesthood of Christ and in the Mass they 'offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with it' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 11). Whilst this is a shared offering, there is still within the one action a distinction of ministries: priest and people are united but fulfil different functions (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 10). There can never be, however, any justification for relegating the laity to the role of spectators, required passively to observe all that the ordained minister carries out on their behalf. Just as we seek from men and women the most active participation possible in the saving and sanctifying mission of the

Church, so we must aim at achieving the most active participation possible of both men and women in the preparation and the celebration of the liturgy.

61. In the international Synod of 1971, the bishops explained: 'The eucharist forms the community and places it at the service of men'. Through the eucharist we become more profoundly the Church and we are sent as a Church to fulfil our mission in and for the world. In our efforts to achieve renewal we have not been conspicuously successful in establishing this truth. We need to discover the link between Mass and mission, between worship and way of life. We have to implement to the full a liturgy which is flexible and sensitive to local needs and which draws on the often untapped wealth of alternatives already offered in the official norms of the Church. We have to become aware of the existing possibilities in the liturgy for evangelising ourselves and others and for communicating the gospel message in all its richness.
62. This heightened understanding of the liturgy is not achieved spontaneously. There is need for a sustained programme of liturgical education and formation. The bishop is at the heart of the local Church's prayer and offering and has responsibility for every aspect of public worship in the diocese. Priests are co-operators and sharers in the bishop's office and it is on them that he depends for the continuing liturgical formation and education of his people. Normally he will seek advice and co-operation from a diocesan liturgical commission which adequately represents clergy, religious and laity. Such a commission can be invaluable in promoting education in the liturgy and the necessary formation of people and priests. It can give service to the parishes of the diocese and perhaps maintain contact with representative groups established at deanery level. There is much experience to be shared between parishes and it is often within the parish that an effective sharing of experience and ideas can be carried out. A parish liturgy group, working with the priest, can help greatly to ensure the development of full participation by all members of the community in parish worship. In this way also much can be done to relate the real concern and spirit of the people to the celebration of the parish Mass.
63. At parish level a great deal has already been done to encourage a better tradition of music but much more remains to be done. There is still scope for the better organisation and training of readers at Mass, for the greater involvement of parishioners in the preparation of the Prayers of the Faithful, for a more imaginative and significant use of the Offertory procession. The commissioning of properly

trained religious and lay people as extraordinary ministers of the eucharist has helped to ensure the better service of the sacramental needs of the people.

64. The *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* says that the faithful 'should be encouraged to desire Communion under both kinds in which the meaning of the eucharistic banquet is more fully signified' (n. 241). At the Congress the request was made that, to express more fully the sacramental symbolism of eating and drinking, as Christ commanded, Communion should, as the norm, be given under the form of bread and wine at Mass. We view this request sympathetically, but we have to make it clear that we are not in a position to give general permission indiscriminately. The *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* and the other more recent documents have listed a number of occasions when Communion under both kinds may be received. In addition, by the agreement of the Bishops' Conference, a bishop may grant permission on other occasions, for pastoral reasons, subject always to suitable catechesis having been given. We recognise that there are a number of practical difficulties but believe that experience will show how these may be overcome.
65. We gladly endorse the suggestion from the Congress that in our celebration of the liturgy we should be more sensitive to the particular needs of parishioners and of the smaller communities which make up the parish. We welcome the recommendation that parishes should celebrate the goodness, beauty and spirituality of married life in prayer, liturgy, sermons and anniversary Masses. It is a priority that the spiritual life of married couples and families should be fostered in this way. Means should also be sought of relating people's faith to their working lives and to their civic and national responsibilities. Every effort should be made to show support and encouragement and to make liturgical provision for other special groups in the parish. Everywhere parishes should become aware of the need positively to welcome newcomers, visitors or those seeking a faith. There should be constant concern for lapsed Catholics who may have been quite out of touch with the Mass and sacramental practice since before the liturgical renewal called for by the Council. Special attention ought to be given to groups whose particular needs are often not adequately met in public worship, for example the elderly, the handicapped, immigrants and young people. Within the parishes there must be close attention to the liturgy and worship carried out in our Catholic schools. If these are to be real communities of faith, thoughtful preparation

must take place to ensure the participation of the young people and their teachers.

66. People sometimes write and speak as if there were tension between personal prayer and liturgical worship. In fact, each needs the other: each nourishes the other. Catholics ought to grow in a life of prayer and they have the right to expect their priests to teach them how to pray. We commend the formation of local and family prayer-groups; we recommend the practice of regular residential 'retreats' as especially valuable in developing personal spirituality. Public prayer ought not to be confined to the celebration of Mass. It is of great importance that the Catholic community should develop forms of public prayer and devotion which are authentic and richly varied and which meet people's needs today. The traditional devotions, like Benediction, Holy Hour, the Rosary, provide for a great many people an introduction to a simple form of contemplative prayer. Such familiar devotions should be restored or revitalised, and there is also a need to produce out of the Church's abundance new forms of devotion. We recommend the wider introduction at parish level of the Church's Evening Prayer or Night Prayer. The Church learned to focus attention on aspects of the faith at fixed times of the year. The month of May helps to foster devotion to Our Lady; in November we pray for the faithful departed. Popular devotions like these take a long time to strike root. We are the poorer if they are neglected and we may not easily find other similar opportunities for catechesis.
67. The liturgy and the Church's spiritual tradition reveal the real meaning of the communion of Saints. It is a teaching greatly enriched by a deeper understanding of the Church as people of God and body of Christ. The saints are our fellow citizens; they are leaders and teachers in things of the spirit. Unique within the communion of saints is Mary, the Mother of God. She is the new Eve, the first of the redeemed. In personal prayer, liturgical celebration and community prayer we must turn regularly to her and with full confidence. The role and place of Mary is being rediscovered and revalued in ecumenical centres and shrines, in the most recent biblical scholarship and in our national Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Historically England, which was known as Mary's Dowry, has had a particular devotion to her which is evidenced by the pre-Reformation churches dedicated to her, and to the mysteries of her life. In Wales a similar devotion to Mary is reflected in many name-places and even in the names of flowers.
68. The parish church and the parish Mass should, when and where appropriate, be the setting for the reception of the other sacraments

which should be seen as part of the public worship of the whole community. Marriage, baptism and confirmation are properly celebrated in this way. We welcome the request made at the Congress for more services of reconciliation with individual confession and absolution. We recommend the provision of facilities for 'face-to-face' confession for those who desire it, whilst maintaining the option of confession in the traditional manner. We take note of the request made in the Congress for a review of the conditions for the granting of general absolution. Individual confession and absolution remains the norm for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. We have already represented to the Holy See our belief, founded on pastoral practice, that the occasional use of the rite of penance with general absolution meets a genuine pastoral need, leading in many cases to a notable increase in the subsequent number of individual private confessions. We will add the request of the Congress delegates to any future representations to the Holy See.

69. To achieve nationwide renewal of the Church's liturgy there is clearly need for education and formation at every level. The Congress delegates specifically asked that a National Liturgical Institute be established for this purpose. We are not at present convinced that this would be the best way to meet the needs of renewal which have to be tackled at a diocesan and parochial level. We have already appointed a National Adviser for Liturgical Formation who is currently examining what needs to be done at this more local level. Proposals were also made for a National Pastoral Institute and for a National Catechetical Centre. We deal with these suggestions again in paragraph 153. It will be important to examine closely what our existing institutions can contribute to meeting the needs that these proposals underline.

B. — ONE IN CHRIST: WORK FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

'Almost everyone, though in different ways, longs that there may be one visible Church of God, the Church truly universal and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God'.

— (Decree on Ecumenism, n. 1)

70. The strength and depth of the delegates' desire for Christian unity may have surprised some people but it was consistent with every finding of the preliminary consultation for the Congress. Doctrinally it is another fruit of our deeper understanding of baptism. From

common baptism comes the sharing in God's life, our adopted sonship and our brotherhood in Christ. It is the realisation of a common baptism that permits us to say that the gift of unity is already in the process of being given. The one-ness of Christians baptised into the Body of Christ needs, however, to become a visible and organic unity. Furthermore the fulness of unity may yet seem far away because of divisions in belief and different concepts of authority. Yet the clearer perception of baptism is generating momentum towards full communion. It is being experienced particularly by those committed to their own Churches in England and Wales. So much so that we feel able to remark that, although we are still divided, although we have not achieved that unity for which Christ prayed the night before he died, we are becoming almost imperceptibly one community of reconciliation. We are no longer just communities in process of reconciliation: we have achieved — albeit with the reservation that our common sinfulness and blurred vision imposes on such an affirmation — a reconciliation in charity.

71. Nevertheless we wish to emphasise that we do not see any significant step being taken towards full organic unity, if it involves compromise on matters of doctrine essential to the fulness of christian faith.
72. We take seriously the recommendation of the Congress that Christians in their separation should do everything together except what conscience forces them to do apart. This is all the more important in contemporary society where the gulf is set not between Christians but between Christians and those who either do not acknowledge or have abandoned any commitment to Christian belief or morality. The practical consequences of this are wide-ranging. They must be kept under constant review, particularly at local level. They have profound implications, for instance, where partnership in mission is under consideration, and they also have bearing on our planning of resources, our educational policy and our initiatives in caring for the elderly, the handicapped, the house-bound and others in need.
73. The Congress undoubtedly felt that one important way forward for divided Christians was to find unity by discovering new ways of sharing in mission both at home and overseas. When Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Runcie met recently in Accra, they issued a statement which said: 'The talents and resources of all the Churches must be shared if Christ is to be seen and heard effectively' and they endorsed a commitment to collaborate more earnestly in a 'greater common witness to Christ'. The concern for overseas

mission is deeply shared by all Christian Churches. Co-operation here is both possible and desirable. The National Missionary Council is discussing the possibility of full membership of the Conference for World Mission of the British Council of Churches; this would be a source of added strength and mutual benefit. Moreover, it would be a stimulus to further unity. World development is another area of Christian concern where joint ecumenical action has been taken in the past and will rightly continue to be taken. At home there is already some measure of co-operation and sharing in mission at national, diocesan and local level. Our common baptism demands this and must inevitably lead to the consideration of a certain sharing of resources. There must obviously be discussion of these issues before joint action can be taken in a particular project, but we must always be ready to be led by the Spirit.

74. The eager longing for Christian unity, which is widespread amongst our people, was no doubt the inspiration for the clear call from the Congress that we should seek full membership of the British Council of Churches as a public witness to the importance we attach to 'ecumenism'. The Council is also the only forum where we can regularly meet with the Free Churches at national level. A few years ago the Bishops' Conference decided not to seek at that time full membership. Some of our anxieties then have since been eased by further consultations about the status of moral statements issued in the name of the Council. There are also questions of manpower, structure and finance. To avoid unnecessary duplication, we would need to re-examine our own consultative structures in order to integrate some of them more effectively into an ecumenical pattern. Economies might well have to be made elsewhere to allow for additional commitments. Yet we fully accept that our approach to this matter cannot be purely administrative and economic. The recommendation expressed at the National Pastoral Congress of a need here and now to make a convincing gesture is itself a welcome and precious witness of concern for advancing the cause of unity. It is sure of its place in our consideration of an issue which as well as involving others besides ourselves, calls for the joint gift of light and warmth in its adequate solution. Is it calculated to promote the fulness of unity itself and a more coherent Christian witness 'that the world may believe'? At this stage we commit ourselves to a re-examination of all these questions.
75. We welcome the fact that where local councils of churches exist, over 70% of them number Roman Catholic parishes as full members. Other parishes also take part in more informal ecumenical structures at local level. We encourage the development of small

groups established at local level to promote joint Christian prayer, study and mission. We welcome the fact that so many of our priests are members of clergy fraternals. We would stress to them that their attitude often largely determines locally the extent of the ecumenical co-operation of their parishioners and the likelihood of growth in Christian unity. Concern for such unity is not optional. It is an inescapable consequence of our baptism and mission.

76. Later in this Message we intend to deal at greater length with our concern for marriage and the family. There are clear advantages in a Catholic finding as a life partner in marriage one who shares fully the same faith and religious practice. At the same time we recognise that marriages between Catholics and members of other Christian churches call for particular sensitivity and unremitting pastoral attention. It is true that many non-Catholic partners in mixed marriages are not themselves committed members of their own Churches but this is no ground for our ignoring them in our care for their marriages and family life. But here we recognise the potential ecumenical significance of marriages between committed Christians. These can offer opportunities for spiritual and ecumenical growth for which support should be given. This will be especially important in prayer and worship and in the sensitive spiritual upbringing of the children of these marriages. Concern for families where the parents are of different Churches led Congress delegates to ask not for 'inter-communion' but that non-Catholic partners whose eucharistic faith agrees with that of the Catholic Church might on certain occasions be welcomed to receive Holy Communion.
77. In certain circumstances for serious reasons the practice of admitting non-Catholics to Holy Communion has been allowed by the universal Church when, for a considerable period, non-Catholics have no access to their own Church or minister and when their faith in the Real Presence is compatible with our own. These conditions would seem rarely to be fulfilled in our countries. In our present circumstances it is necessary to realise that it could be counter-productive to use what is the perfect symbol of unity achieved as a means of achieving it. This could defer indefinitely the full corporate union for which we all pray. We keep this delicate matter under review, but, while fully sensitive to the pain such exclusion can cause, we are unable to compromise these principles.
78. A further issue raised by Congress delegates concerned the future development of joint Christian schools. A number of such schools have already been established. We wish to continue to investigate

the possibility of further shared schools, not on a merely pragmatic basis, but in order to discover the potential that might lie in this for ecumenical and other reasons. It is hard to foresee circumstances in the immediate future where such schools are likely to be purpose-built in any number. More likely it will be a question of sharing resources of various kinds and we as Catholics should be generous in this. But where there are projects for shared buildings, arrangements must so be made as to preserve the distinctiveness of religious traditions whilst at the same time ensuring inter-denominational co-operation.

79. The way ahead for Christian unity is an exciting challenge. We make our own the words of the Congress Declaration: 'We profess our growing conviction of the need for more profound unity with our fellow Christians and we will continue to search for more effective ways of achieving that unity'.

C. — SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVANGELISATION:

HOME AND OVERSEAS

80. The Second Vatican Council challenged the conscience of every Catholic when it stated categorically: 'The whole Church is missionary and the work of evangelisation is a basic duty of the people of God' (*Decree on Missionary Activity*, n. 35). Here is a clear reminder that as a baptised people we share responsibility for the work of evangelisation at home and abroad. For some this is just a change of emphasis: for most it is a totally new concept. Old attitudes die hard. When Europe was Christendom, or even when Europe was later experiencing its civil wars among Christians, it was possible to regard Europeans as to some extent already evangelised. Christ's gospel had been preached to them. Christians looked overseas for pagans to convert and baptise. The mission-fields were then the colonial empires of Latin America and Africa or the far-off lands of Asia. Priests and religious 'went on the missions' — it was something they did overseas. The involvement of lay Catholics was mainly restricted to financial support for the foreign missions.
81. When St Paul wrote: 'God in Christ is reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled' (2 Cor 5:19), he was reminding the early Christians of their duty to be witnesses of

Christ 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). We are, as he wrote, to be 'ambassadors for Christ'. The news we bring is the Good News that the world has been saved by Christ and that everyone is called to reconciliation with God. It is a message that today has to be communicated to our own society in England and Wales with the same energy as is given to missionary activity overseas.

82. There was relatively sparse explicit reference to this aspect of evangelisation in the reports from the Congress. We must remember that evangelisation is a subject which is really the concern of all sectors of the Congress and therefore directly or indirectly it is dealt with in each part of this Message: it is, for example, at the heart of Christian education and of justice. But we have also to admit that there is an urgent priority for all of us to reflect prayerfully and humbly on our present failure to grasp the full implications of the responsibilities which arise from our baptism and confirmation. We cannot be content just to keep the faith. We must spread it.
83. England and Wales are mission territories. Our cities and towns, the decaying city-centres, the over-spill sprawling suburbs and new towns, the high-rise flats and the anonymous Council-estates, the increasingly isolated villages and rural areas, each poses urgent questions and presents opportunities for the proclamation of the Word of God. The Word can be offered in many ways to those who have even now never had the gospel preached to them. For less than one in ten of our fellow-countrymen goes to church on Sunday. Increasing numbers of children are not baptised. Registry office marriages grow in popularity. It is now possible for people in our land to grow up, live and die without having significant contact with the gospel or with the Christian Church and its sacramental hallowing of life. Even churches in our towns and cities often stand closed throughout the week because of the dangers of vandalism and theft.
84. In this secularist situation Catholics can witness to gospel truth by almost every aspect of their life at home and at work, their leisure activities, their political involvement, their active association with local enterprises. Their field of evangelisation also includes, in the words of Pope Paul VI, 'other realities such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work and suffering' (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 70). They testify whenever they create visible Christian communities which pray together and give public witness of love and care for others as a sign of the risen Christ. For the work of evangelisation is not the specialised activity of a few trained experts. It is part of our daily witness as we

endeavour to live in accordance with Christian truth and principles. The very contrast of such beliefs and standards with so many of the now accepted features of contemporary life underlines the need for all of us in the prophetic Church to deepen our knowledge and understanding of our faith. Catholics must be prepared to proclaim our beliefs without aggression but perhaps more explicitly than was required in the past when Christian values were the accepted norm. Today the Christian often faces indifference rather than opposition, but he must try to understand how to present the truths of the gospel as well as the relevance of those truths to the pressures which today cloud the minds of those who do not share our Christian belief.

85. Catholics have to admit that awareness of our responsibility for spreading the gospel is not vivid among us at home in England and Wales. We lack a developed strategy for evangelising our nation. We have no adequate analysis of lapsation and an insufficient analysis of the world we need to evangelise. Many of our pre-occupations have to do with our internal concerns as an institutional Church and not with the 'world outside'. We are living in a society which is profoundly influenced by the mass-media and which is trying to come to terms with the implications of micro-electronics. Just as the Church must ensure that facilities are available for the training of clergy and laity in the use of the media for communicating the message which Christ has entrusted to us, so also must we make sure that the Good News is imparted in a way which has meaning for the protagonists as well as the victims of the 'micro-chip revolution'. But it is God's word we must impart: there is no substitute for our deeper understanding of the truths of our holy religion.
86. Looking out from this island, we realise that a huge task awaits the Church world-wide. There are three billion people living today who do not know Christ. Two-thirds of these are in Asia. With other Churches throughout the world we share this task of primary evangelisation. We at home must try to understand the developing concept of world-mission. The foreign-mission fields of former years have become the 'young Churches' of today, young not only in years but in the freshness of their faith and in their hope for the future. By the Churches of the Old World they are now to be regarded as Sister Churches, equal in dignity and worthy of all respect. We from the older Churches of the West have grown to appreciate that evangelisation is a two-way process; it is receiving as well as giving. The young Churches still need our help and support although, even here, we have learned that we should not decide what to give before

asking them what they need. For our part we can benefit from the African's sense of joy, the Asian's sense of prayer and spirituality, and the Latin American's passion for justice. This acknowledgement of giving and receiving makes true partnership and sharing possible.

87. In the overseas mission-fields, the presence of lay missionaries has brought about a release of new energy. When missionary work was the exclusive task of priests and religious, a vital dimension of the Church's witness was lacking. We gratefully acknowledge this welcome development which underlines that every Christian is called to mission by baptism and confirmation. We recognise their need for adequate financial support and for their representation in appropriate Church consultative bodies.
88. We accept that the Second Vatican Council taught Catholics to look on the other great world religions with respect and to recognise that God is also in them. The Church now encourages us to approach them in a spirit of dialogue, of listening and sharing with humility. This has had enormous significance for overseas mission. But the time has come for us to absorb its lesson for our own situation at home. We are now part of a society which is multi-cultural and multi-religious. So far, in England and Wales, our official contacts and consultations with non-Christian religions have been limited to our valued link with the Jewish faith. We should try to become much better acquainted with the background and beliefs of non-Christian immigrants to our countries. In particular, we should approach them in a spirit of open-ness and humility to learn, to understand, to appreciate and gain from their religious traditions. At the same time we should make known to them our own belief, the Good News of Jesus Christ. We realise that this kind of approach does not come naturally to many of us, but it is required of us by the new insights into the missionary vocation of every Christian. We wish to encourage personal contact, offers of hospitality and initiatives by parishes. We accept the principle that our concern for immigrants and ethnic groups should be co-ordinated with the work of their own organisations and with that of other Churches. We look to returned missionaries, or to diocesan priests who have spent time in overseas mission work, to provide the Church here with expert and experienced chaplains to immigrants.
89. We accept completely the Church's new awareness that the local Church, the diocese, has prime responsibility for sharing in overseas mission. We accept the task of promoting missionary awareness at all levels of the Church. We already have diocesan clergy and laity on overseas mission and we hope that given suitable occasion we may

continue to develop for ourselves personal knowledge and experience of their work and the life of those they are serving. We desire to show in future more effective support for men and women from our dioceses who as members of a Religious Institute have responded to the overseas missionary vocation or who belong to missionary societies. We acknowledge that for priests and people in our parishes prayers and self-denial are a basic form of missionary activity. We recognise our responsibility to devote adequate financial resources to the missions. We pay tribute to our people whose generous interest in missionary endeavour has been evident in so many ways and over so many years. We are confident that the same zealous missionary spirit will match these new challenges.

D. — MAKING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST:

THE ORDAINED MINISTRIES

90. We have reflected at length on the richly varied life of the people of God, drawn into the mission of the Church through baptism. We have seen how the various tasks and functions within the Church are complementary. In several sectors of the Congress delegates spoke of certain aspects of the ministries and vocations in the Church and offered observations and recommendations regarding their future fulfilment. We wish to respond to these in so far as they refer to important developments which are now present or may be foreseen. While recalling what we have already written about the relationships between the various ministries, and stressing the importance of certain aspects of the service to be given, we make no attempt here to treat comprehensively of the ordained ministries as such. We merely point to present areas of concern and call attention to certain priorities.
91. We are grateful to the National Pastoral Congress for a unique opportunity to experience immediately and profoundly what it is to be a bishop in the Church today. In the various sectors there was emphasis on the many-sided calling of a bishop to be priest and pastor, preacher and teacher in his local Church, the diocese. Indeed, the preaching of the gospel occupies 'a pre-eminent place among the principal duties of bishops' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 25). The bishop is seen to be the chief creator of community and the main seeker after Christian unity. He is animator and promoter of co-ordinated apostolic effort in the local Church. He is conscious of the needs of the whole community but must have special concern for the

young, the vulnerable, the disadvantaged and the lapsed. No individual, however graced, could fulfil all these functions with equal effectiveness, so a bishop without abdicating responsibility must delegate adequately in order to release the energies and initiatives of his collaborators. The Congress delegates were anxious that bishops should be personally known and pastorally effective within their diocese. To know as well as to be known is our desire as shepherds each of our own flock (cf. *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office*, n. 30) and yet this first concern has to be maintained alongside our collegial responsibilities in our Bishops' Conference and indeed in the universal Church. Bishops have to be communicators in the deepest sense of that word — devoted to and engaged in the building up of that communion which is the incarnate Body of Christ, the Church. Above all, bishops must strive ceaselessly for sanctity in and through their ministry. In this pursuit of holiness we commend ourselves most earnestly to the prayers of those we are called to serve.

92. In the years following the Second Vatican Council many priests felt that in the Council documents their role had been almost neglected at the expense of that of the bishops. But the clear teaching of the Council Fathers was that the ordained ministries of episcopate and priesthood are closely related. 'All priests, both diocesan and religious, participate in and exercise with the bishop the one priesthood of Christ and are thereby meant to be prudent co-operators of the episcopal order. In securing the welfare of souls, however, the first place is held by diocesan priests who are incardinated or attached to a particular Church and who fully dedicate themselves to its service by way of pasturing a single portion of the Lord's flock. In consequence they form one 'presbytery' and one family, whose father is the bishop . . . Pastors, however, co-operate with the bishops in a very special way, for as shepherds in their own right they are entrusted with the care of souls in a certain part of the diocese under the bishop's authority' (*Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office*, nn. 28, 30). Whatever is said therefore about the bishops and their ministry can be said also in a reflected way of the priests who, together with their bishop, constitute one priesthood. As the Council Fathers also taught: 'Associated with their bishop in a spirit of trust and generosity, priests make him present in a certain sense in the individual local congregations of the faithful, and take upon themselves, as far as they are able, his duties and concerns, discharging them with daily care' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 28).

93. In Part One of this Message we have already stressed the priest's spiritual service of his people. We recognise that, like every Christian, he also is called to holiness by God and that he strives for this

holiness in and through his ministry. The priest must be a man of prayer, conscious of the need to prepare and celebrate the Mass worthily, with reverence, devotion and joy, to administer all the sacraments in a way which draws the most grace-filled response from their recipients. He must devote much of his energy to the regular preaching of the Word of God on which his people are so dependent for spiritual nourishment and inspiration. To this end he must continually renew himself by the study of scripture and theology, whilst at the same time trying to keep in touch with the real needs of his people. He must teach by example as well as by word: a man 'who cries out the gospel with the whole of his life' (*Charles de Foucauld*). The priest's communion with the Lord makes him a healer, a bridge-builder, a reconciler. He must call, form and sustain the laity in their own demanding vocation and help them in their efforts to shed the light of the gospel on their own secular world. One outstanding feature of the Congress was the trust that was so evident within the people of God. If priests and laity can evince the same trust in each other at parish level, it will guarantee the development of real community and of shared responsibility.

94. We welcome and endorse wholeheartedly the recognition in the Congress of the inestimable value of priestly celibacy. We have been reminded by Pope John Paul in his letter to the priests of the world that celibacy is to be seen as in itself a gift from God to man rather than a sacrificial act of renunciation by one approaching the priesthood. We do not under-estimate the difficulties in the life of a priest today consequent upon the pressures and life-style of contemporary society. We publicly express our gratitude and admiration for our priests in their fidelity and we thank God for the gift and grace he has given to them. Although there are signs of an improvement in the number of vocations to the priesthood, we face together some of the problems of an ageing clergy. A real brotherhood in the priesthood, founded on prayer and genuine sharing, can do much to overcome the obvious difficulties in a generation gap between the more senior priests of today and the younger men who respond to the call to priestly service. It is the development of this sense of brotherhood rather than administrative measures which will be the strength of the Church we desire to see. In the Congress several practical recommendations were made about the appointment of priests and their life-style. Circumstances inevitably vary from one part of the country to another, so these suggestions are best remitted to the local Church for serious consideration.
95. It was primarily concern for the pastoral needs of God's people which led certain delegates to suggest that 'careful consideration be

given to the question whether it be God's will that married men should at this time be called to the priesthood'. Pastoral needs arising from the shortage of clergy are greater in other parts of the world than in our own country. There have been individual precedents within the past thirty years and the decision rests ultimately with the Holy See where we may be sure that careful consideration is regularly given to this question. There are of course many related issues, as was evident when the matter was discussed by the Synod of Bishops in 1971. We have ourselves considered the matter more recently and decided against making a petition to the Holy See at the present time. However, in bringing this request to the attention of the appropriate Roman Congregation we will emphasise the pastoral concern that underlies it.

96. The same sector considered the question of the eventual ordination of women to the priesthood and pleaded 'that the matter be explored seriously at this time'. The matter has, in fact, been examined relatively recently by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the request of Pope Paul VI and the final result of that examination is contained in *The Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* (1976). This Declaration states that the Sacred Congregation judged it necessary 'to recall that the Church, in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorised to admit women to priestly ordination'. The reasons are serious and impressive. They reflect an attitude shared by the Orthodox Churches and, until recently, by the whole Anglican Communion. We would not wish to arouse unrealistic expectations by agreeing to raise the matter once more with the Holy See. We concede that the recommendation is phrased with moderation but its consequences are far-reaching. We note that this same sector also made the request for women's admission to the permanent diaconate. We recall that, in presenting the above-mentioned Declaration, the Sacred Congregation stated that this question 'must be taken up fully by direct study of the texts without preconceived ideas', and judged that the matter should be kept for future study and not touched on in that particular Declaration. It would seem to us, therefore, that this matter could now be given further consideration.
97. The permanent diaconate as such was given a positive but guarded welcome in the Congress and was seen as a ministry necessary in the pastoral work of the Church. It was evident that a clearer understanding is needed about the nature of this ordained ministry, about how candidates should be prepared for it and how it should be exercised in these countries. There is a steadily increasing number of

permanent deacons in some but not all of our dioceses. It has to be recognised that the restoration of this order in the life and ministry of the Church is not intended as a temporary and partial solution of pastoral difficulties arising from the shortage of priests. The permanent diaconate is a separate ministry in which carefully prepared mature men 'strengthened by sacramental grace are dedicated to the people of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in their service of the liturgy, of the gospel and of works of charity' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 19). Experience already shows that permanent deacons should not be regarded as 'clericalised laymen'. With the grace of Order and the authority it gives, they are able to be 'heralds of the Gospel' in a way which can be a real enrichment in the life of a diocese or parish in a particular sphere of the Church's mission.

98. Every member of the Church has a personal responsibility for mission. In the nature of things some find a particular form of service to be more suited to their gifts and temperaments. This can become for them a special ministry which they give to others in the name of Christ. The Church had recognised and formally instituted two such ministries connected with divine worship: the ministry of acolyte and that of lector. Neither has been widely adopted in England and Wales, because of a fear lest its introduction might seem a restriction upon the customary service of young men and boys in the sanctuary, and upon the inclusion of many women amongst the readers in our parishes. The distinction seems therefore to be made in practice between an ordained ministry with its long-term commitment and the fulfilment of certain functions or duties in the local Church. To meet the latter situation it is possible for bishops to commission individuals to carry out specific tasks or ministries in clearly specified circumstances. The commissioning of the diocesan delegates to the National Pastoral Congress was a case in point where the individuals concerned assumed an official if temporary role in the life of the local Church. The same practice could eventually be developed with regard to catechists, teachers, youth workers, or lay assistants in parishes. In this way they could be constantly recalled to the source and inspiration of what they do for others and be reminded that this is an expression of their Christian baptism.

E. — CALLED TO LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

99. All our relationships as individuals have significance for our Christian life. We have already considered how Christians live together as a worshipping community: how the life of that community seeks

expression in an effective desire for Christian unity and for restored relationships: and how the redeemed Christian relates to those in the world who need to have the gospel preached to them. But personal relationships are essential to human living and growth. They shape and develop each individual. They are crucial for individual happiness and fulfilment. Through them individuals express love and concern for one another. People find Christ incarnate in their relationships with others.

100. The family is the basic community in society. In its varied forms it is the universal experience of humanity and is a profound influence on spiritual and emotional growth. For the vast majority of people the most important human relationship they have is marriage. It is a complex relationship which develops from first love, through absorption in young children, concern for jobs and careers, the stresses of the adolescent independence of a growing family, and on perhaps to retirement and the greater isolation of a couple in old age. In marriage a couple grow together. A true understanding of marriage must take account of all these factors. Children should be able to learn within the family how to love and to be loved, how to handle feelings, conflicts, growth and loss. It is in the family that the individual can learn how to be human and how to achieve self-knowledge and an awareness of dependence.
101. We affirm the immense importance and value of marriage and the family as the setting within which most people are called to holiness of life. We recognise also that in a unique way the family carries forward the mission of the Church into the everyday world and, as we have suggested earlier, is in some sense a model of the Church itself in its mission to evangelise society.
102. The Congress showed a sensitive appreciation of the importance and meaning of marriage for Christian life and mission. Delegates urged that the teaching Church should find ways of listening attentively to the experience of married Christians and particularly to their insights into the meaning and consequences of a life-long sexual relationship. It was in reality a plea that committed Catholic laity should be able to contribute to the continuing development of the Church's teaching on marriage. They expressed a need for 'a renewed positive theology of marriage as covenant, covering all aspects of the marriage relationship'. The foundations of such teaching were laid down clearly at the Second Vatican Council in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*, nn. 47-52). There has already been a major development throughout this century in the Church's understanding of married love and

sexuality, reflecting advances in the human sciences. It is evidenced in the Church's current teaching on responsible parenthood and in its maturing awareness of the real balance in marriage between fruitfulness and love. It would be unrealistic to claim that the Church has finally achieved a definitive understanding of all that the gospel can reveal to us about Christian marriage. The Council taught that for Christians marriage is 'an image and a sharing in the partnership of love between Christ and the Church' and that the Christian family can show forth to all men 'Christ's living presence in the world and the authentic nature of the Church' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 48). Marriage partakes of the mystery of the Church and will continually yield up new treasures. An enriched theology of marriage will have to take into account the growth of human relationships, the need for true communication within marriage, and the understanding of sexual intercourse both as a life-giving act and as a communication of love and self to one's partner. It will have to see even more profoundly that sexual love in marriage is a relationship in which a couple affirm each other's identity, by which they heal and sustain each other and through which they make Christ sacramentally present to each other.

103. Within this context of concern for the comprehensive development of the Church's teaching on marriage, the Congress sector on the Family added further reflections on responsible parenthood and on the moral problems which contraception poses for the Catholic conscience. The sector delegates were careful in their formulation in asking for a fundamental re-examination of the Church's teaching on marriage, sexuality and contraception. The mind of this sector of our Congress should be taken in a constructive sense. It is related to the general concern also expressed that the Church's teaching on every aspect of marriage should be developed positively. Development carries with it the idea of organic growth. It involves clearer insight and a deeper understanding of the meaning and implications of truths already possessed and continually meditated upon in the light of fresh knowledge or of changing circumstances. As we have explained, marriage and the family are central to our Christian calling and life, and today both need to be built up, strengthened and better understood and appreciated. Christian marriage — like the mystery of the Church itself with which it is so closely linked — has always to be seen afresh with the eyes of faith nourished by experience and has to be enriched by continuing reflection.
104. The Encyclical *Humanae vitae* is the authentic teaching of the Church. It has to be read in the light of the Vatican Council's teaching already referred to. Conjugal love consists in the gift of one person

to another, a gift which embraces the human being as a whole, body and soul, and such conjugal love is most completely fulfilled by parenthood. It is in this context of the emphasis to be placed on the value of love that the rejection of the use of artificial contraception is situated. The truth which the Church invites us to reflect upon is that its teaching on responsible parenthood is to be understood within the true meaning of marriage as a total, mutual self-giving, which the Council has expressed in terms of covenant (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 48).

105. We must also recognise the unique nature of child-bearing and its place in our human existence. We all need to think more profoundly about the immeasurable value of the individual person. A human being is more than a population statistic. An individual is in a limited and created way an unrepeatable expression of what God himself is. Each person is an image of the infinite God. So human life has an absolute value, each individual a unique worth. Human life is the summit of God's creation. And that is the profoundly Christian insight behind the use of the word 'procreation'. When husband and wife have a child, they share in God's continuing creation. As our Bishops' Conference stated in 1968, there is in procreation 'a triple partnership of husband, wife and God'. We know this insight does not put an end to moral dilemmas, but it is quite definitely a reminder that at this point we touch the mystery of the origin of all life and that we must accordingly develop our thoughts and attitudes with wonder and reverence for life and for God, its author.
106. We are convinced that the Church's mind on the full meaning of marriage and the human relationship within marriage needs continual examination and greater explanation to enable it to be better understood and lived. Any further development on the subject will of course be made in complete fidelity to the Church's *magisterium*. We remind our people that the Synod of Bishops later this autumn will be reflecting on the subject of the family and with the help of our prayers will contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject.
107. We also recommend for local implementation in our dioceses the positive ideas put forward at the Congress for better preparation of people for marriage and more effective support for marriages and families. There must be long-term and continuing education for marriage. Family life can be developed through the setting up of adult groups for discussion and formation, reflecting in faith on life-experience and providing broad education and skills. Local com-

munities should be able to call on married couples, schools and parish-based courses to create programmes of education for marriage. Bishops and dioceses will no doubt tackle in their own way provision for the preparation of engaged couples for marriage. Valuable suggestions were made at the Congress about the appointment of diocesan co-ordinators to develop all aspects of ministry to marriage and the family and about deanery teams for providing comprehensive preparation for marriage. We propose to consider further the recommendation that engaged couples be asked to give the local parish a period of several months' notice of their intention to marry and of their willingness to undertake preparation for marriage.

108. We ask parish clergy to work out with their lay people how to give continuing and effective support to families and how to meet the needs of families at every stage of their growth. We have already recommended how such concern should be expressed in the liturgy. Married couples will themselves be an obvious source of practical help, and, where possible, other small groups, childless couples, and those who are not married should also be involved. As we have pointed out, the needs experienced by families will change in nature and urgency at different stages of their relationship. Parish support must take account of this and be forthcoming especially in the early years of any family's existence. Parishes should also consider how they can introduce or develop lay organisations which can involve whole families in their membership or at least enable husbands and wives to work together. In brief, the Church in England and Wales must give the utmost priority to establishing ways and means of providing at diocesan level education and support for marriages and family life.
109. Marital breakdown throughout Britain has reached alarming proportions. We cannot shut our eyes to the pastoral problems this creates for parents and children. Parishes should try to be alert to the needs of single parents and their children and to offer sensitive practical help and support. There can be no doubt that our Church in England and Wales faces here a growing and complex problem which it may not ignore. We admit that there is a need for us all to grow in our pastoral understanding of individuals whose marriages have broken down and whose family unity has been lost. While the problem of divorce is daunting enough, the questions posed by Catholics who enter a second irregular marriage are even more searching. Can they ever be admitted again to Holy Communion? May they ever have their second marriage blessed by the Church?
110. We welcome this opportunity — and we shall seek others — to reaffirm the unchanging teaching of the Roman Catholic Church

that a Christian marriage, freely and properly entered into and consummated, is for ever indissoluble. No human power can dissolve the bond so created between husband and wife, the commitment so total and irrevocable that it represents for us a symbol of that union of love and mutual giving which binds together Christ and his Church. We have to accept, however, that there is widespread confusion amongst many Catholics and in society at large about the Church's teaching and practice on marriages which have, from the time of the wedding, lacked one or more elements necessary to make them true Christian unions. We recognise the need to explain this teaching on nullity more clearly to the Catholic community and to the public who mistakenly regard it as 'Catholic divorce'. We also recognise the urgent need of showing understanding for divorced Catholics who have remarried. They should be encouraged to play as full a part as possible in the life of the local parish, and helped in their continuing baptismal responsibility to bring up their families in the Catholic faith. They should always seek from specially delegated or well-qualified priests individual help and advice about their present state; it could be that the Church's matrimonial courts would accept that the previous marriage was not valid, with the possibility of their sharing again in the full sacramental life of the Church.

111. There are, however, other situations in which there may be moral certainty that the previous marriage was not valid even although this cannot be adequately established in the matrimonial courts, or in which a first valid marriage has broken down irretrievably but a second union is stable. The question of reception of the sacraments in such cases is one which the Bishops' Conference has been considering for some time. We have a most serious responsibility to witness to the life-long and exclusive commitment of a Christian marriage. Yet as pastors and loving servants of our brothers and sisters in the local Churches of England and Wales, we take to heart the sympathy and the compassion expressed by Congress delegates as we continue our deliberations on this very sensitive doctrinal and pastoral issue.

F. — A COMMUNITY OF FAITH:

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, DIOCESE, DEANERY, PARISH, GROUPS

112. The sense of sharing in the life and mission of the Church comes from our understanding of baptism as the means through which we are drawn mystically into Christ's body and are formed thereby

into a community. Rooted in Christ we are set free to live and work together in a loving, confident partnership. We are truly incorporated into a body which is living and growing, a community marked by love, care, acceptance and respect. This community of faith is Christ-centred through its worship, teaching and service. At its heart is the living presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharist. And the eucharist both celebrates and forms the community: at the same time it both expresses and creates the Church. It gives the community a missionary purpose. Each local Church, each diocese, deanery and parish is a living expression of God's people.

113. The Second Vatican Council, in its *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office* n. 36, recalled that 'from the earliest ages of the Church, bishops in charge of particular churches, inspired by a spirit of fraternal charity and by zeal for the universal mission entrusted to the apostles, have pooled their resources and their aspirations in order to promote both the common good and the good of individual churches'. But although this relationship of mutual help was long-established, until recently relatively few countries had formalised the relationship in a Bishops' Conference, with statutes recognised by the Holy See as a basis for its exercising juridical power in certain circumstances. The establishment of our Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, which was formally recognised in January 1967, was a natural consequence of this grant of juridical status, but in many ways its concern has been primarily with pastoral affairs. To that time meetings of the Hierarchy of England and Wales were no more than opportunities for consultation between individual local Ordinaries who might or might not agree a common policy in administering their own dioceses. The Bishops' Conference, as now established, is a nice balance between on the one hand adequate responsibility and initiative for the local bishop's pastoral care for his diocese, and on the other hand his collegial responsibility for the mission of the universal Church and especially for the good of the territory or country of which his diocese is only part. Strictly a national Church as such does not exist: there must be respect for the reasonable autonomy of a diocese, and for this there is a strong theological as well as historical basis. Nevertheless a national group of dioceses, if not exactly a national Church, is a reality. It responds to the needs of a particular nation or territory; it relates to the Holy See with regard to the Church in that nation and it can take certain national initiatives. The National Pastoral Congress was a good example of this.
114. The scope of our Bishops' Conference is explicitly drawn from the Council's decree we have just mentioned: 'An Episcopal Conference

is a kind of council in which bishops of a given nation or territory jointly exercise their pastoral office by way of promoting that greater good which the Church offers mankind especially through forms and programmes of the apostolate which are fittingly adapted to the circumstances of the age' (*Christus Dominus*, n. 38, 1). The Conference possesses detailed statutes regarding its structure and procedures, and it makes provision also for 'episcopal commissions, consisting of bishops and experts', who, 'in accordance with the powers granted to them, assist the Conference in the fulfilment of its functions'. These commissions are of an advisory or consultative nature, each with a bishop as its president or chairman, and with a membership which is drawn from among clergy, religious and laity. 'To ensure that the basis of the advice offered should be reasonably comprehensive, membership of each commission should be widely-drawn and varied in age-range and experience. But its task is essentially to offer advice to the bishops and to assist the Church through the Conference in the various fields of the Church's mission for which responsibility is shared but in which the bishops as a body have a particular ministry to fulfil' (*Review Committee Report*, 1971, n. 8).

115. We welcome this opportunity to place on record our gratitude to the laity, clergy and religious who in the past thirteen years have served on these commissions and have given our Conference and the Church in this country able and generous assistance. The needs of society and the challenges facing the Church change constantly. From time to time it is necessary for us to review both the procedures of our Conference and the structure and work of its constituent commissions. For example, in an earlier section of this Message we have indicated that, if we are to work more closely with the British Council of Churches, it will be necessary for us to review our commission structure to make sure that there is no unnecessary duplication or wastage of our resources. At such a time it may well be desirable to consider the establishment of a commission to advise specifically about pastoral concerns and developments, including the implementation of certain policy recommendations in this Message. This would provide for the co-ordination of experience and possibly of resources, but not as an interference in the proper responsibilities and local initiatives of individual dioceses. But for the immediate future, save where we have indicated that we are taking direct action ourselves, the follow-up to the Congress lies definitely within the responsibility of the dioceses, aided locally, we hope, by the religious orders, by lay organisations and other apostolic groups and of course by the delegates themselves.

116. We have already referred to the statement by the Council Fathers that 'a diocese constitutes a particular Church in which the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active' (*Christus Dominus*, n. 11). Each diocese is therefore a community of faith called to fulfil the life and mission of God's people in an effective way. Its capacity to realise its worshipping, sanctifying, missionary and pastoral purpose, within the total mission of the universal Church, is the primary consideration in assessing its viability. In 1974 a working party established by the Bishops' Conference produced a report entitled *Ground-Plan*. This was published as a consultative document to guide those concerned with the possible re-organisation and re-division of the dioceses of England and Wales. Certain principles were offered; since then two new dioceses have been established and proposals for two others were, after consultation, set aside. Other developments will doubtless be carried through in the future.
117. It is generally agreed that a diocese must be an effective pastoral 'unit'. Yet that very description implies something rather impersonal, whereas there is an increasing awareness of a diocese as a community of the faithful people of God, led by a bishop able to make suitable provision for their spiritual and pastoral needs. It is not just a convenient geographical unit with appropriate numbers. Great importance is rightly attached to the mutual sense of 'belonging' between pastors and people. Clearly the numbers who can be known to a bishop and who can know him are limited but the real criterion is the bishop's capacity, with and through his collaborators, to provide for his priests and people a leadership and service suited to their purpose as a 'particular' Church. The service required is bound to vary with the nature of the diocese, its social and cultural needs, its rural or urban situation.
118. Diocesan development remains under constant review. In the meantime certain valuable experiences are being gained from discovering the relative advantages of the creation of new smaller dioceses (at a time when the overall number of priests is still falling), the use of area bishops acting as a team under the leadership of the bishop of the whole diocese, and the system of episcopal vicars, not themselves necessarily bishops but exercising ordinary jurisdiction in their various spheres of responsibility. It seems unlikely that any one solution will necessarily serve every part of our countries. The important consideration remains the effective spiritual and pastoral collaboration of the bishop with the laity, clergy and religious of the diocese in their life and purpose as a community of faith.

119. We note the growing importance attached by Congress delegates to the deanery as an effective means of pastoral collaboration. In the past the grouping of parishes in deaneries has often meant little more than a channel of consultation between local clergy. But recent years have seen the development of deanery structures in which clergy, religious and laity have come together, usually on a representative basis, to share experiences and resources in meeting common problems and pastoral opportunities. Indeed most of the delegates came to the Congress as representatives of their deaneries. This seems to be a very valuable way of sharing responsibility in the name of the local Church. Deaneries themselves vary greatly in size and numbers, so no general pattern, structure or advice can be offered save that, where a deanery is working on a representative basis, effort must be made to ensure that the representation is authentic. Good communication between and within parishes will be the best means of achieving this.
120. We were glad to recognise in the voice of the Congress an insistence upon the parish as the natural and most effective apostolic community within the life of the Church. Whatever be its size, the parish is seen as a communion of Christian communities made up of all the faithful, whether lapsed or practising their faith, and coming together for prayer, liturgy and the eucharist, the study of the scriptures, for works of charity and mercy, or for social celebrations. Small communities of this kind are a source of strength to the parish as a whole, and must not be exclusive in themselves nor seen as an alternative to parish commitment. Much depends upon the priest in the parish as to how fully these small groups are in fact integrated into the parish community. His role is vital in this; through him the bishop also is able to achieve the effective apostolic collaboration of neighbouring parishes, whether in the deanery or the diocese as a whole.
121. As with dioceses, we have to be realistic about the size of parishes, which must inevitably reflect the availability of clergy as well as the density of population and the character of the area. For many scattered Catholics in rural areas, the sum of parochial effort may well seem to be just coming together for Sunday Mass. Other parishes, established in urban centres, may appear almost too large and too anonymous for the effective sharing of responsibility. There can be no optimum size for a parish. From the point of view of resources and occasionally even of personnel, the 'haves' should consider how to help the 'have-not's'. We take note of certain valuable new experiences at present being gained in the grouping of priests to serve districts with unsettled or changing social needs. But however many

priests may be serving a parish, however large or small, concentrated or scattered it may be, it seems that parishes in general benefit from the development within them of smaller apostolic groups established for general or particular pastoral purposes, provided their work is related to the life and mission of the parish as a whole.

122. Small groups and Catholic organisations and societies, properly established in a parish or deanery, can meet a variety of needs. They can witness, study, evangelise and serve. They can centre around the celebration of house-Masses or the strengthening of family life. They can provide the opportunity for community prayer. They can pray for and foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life. They can concern themselves with the social needs of the area in which they are situated or indeed with general concern for social justice. They are a valuable means of promoting genuine consultation and sharing by priests and people, and in the development of bonds of real friendship. They can be an inspiration and stimulus for ecumenical co-operation and can provide a valuable ministry of welcome to newcomers and others who need the support of involvement in the life of the Christian community. But there can be a danger of fragmentation if they try to operate independently of the local Church and in an inward-looking way. Such abuse is probably rare and we commend most warmly those apostolic and other family movements concerned with the formation and spiritual development of their members. They can contribute much to the revitalisation of the life of the parish as a community of faith.
123. Congress reports stress the importance of a parish showing a wide concern for the needs of the whole neighbourhood and not just for the local requirements of the parish community. The sick, the elderly, the housebound and disadvantaged can be found in every district. They must be encouraged to understand how they can give to the life of the community, as well as receive the attention and care of others. Enforced inactivity can provide for some of them the time and opportunity to become a spiritual power-house for the parish. There is no need to spell out in too great detail the responsibilities to families, to the lapsed, to the deprived, to prisoners and to the people of the Third World. In some areas, also, special attention must be given to the needs of immigrants. Chaplains to immigrants can do much to help with their integration into the life of the local parish. As communities of faith, formed by baptism, parishes everywhere have both a ministry and a mission. They succeed in the exercise of both by close collaboration between the various groups and communities which make them up.

124. We therefore welcome the call of the Congress for a more Christ-like attitude towards the poor, the powerless, the homeless, the handicapped, the deaf and the blind, the elderly and all who suffer in today's society. The parish community should place such people at the centre of its life and concern. As the Congress Declaration stated: 'In them we see the image of Christ crucified, a focus for our love and care, whose needs we must recognise and meet, and from whom we receive a living witness of Christ's passion'.

SECTION II.

GROWING INTO THE FULNESS OF CHRIST: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION

*'Truth on my tongue, His way to guide my walking —
And I shall live, not I but Christ in me'.*

— Congress Hymn

125. The words of the chorus of the Congress hymn — quoted by Pope John Paul in his video-message to delegates — sum up the theme and the basic thrust of the whole Congress. In this meditation on the active presence of the Church in the world, we constantly return to the theme of baptism which makes us members of Christ's body and branches of the true vine. St Paul explained on many occasions how we are each formed into Christ and live his life and how Christ takes form in each one of us and lives our life. We have reflected at length on our incorporation into Christ, our 'becoming' Christ; now we must think about how Christ is formed in each individual.

Catechesis

126. Catechesis is the name given to all that the Church does to make true disciples of those who have already heard the word of God or who have been baptised in Christ Jesus. It is a work of education and formation for Christian living; it is a gradual, many-sided process of growth in faith. It is a life-long process because our potential is never fully realised and we can always explore further the reality of God and his love for us. It is a community process because we grow through our relationships with others. Catechesis makes us ready to listen to the Holy Spirit and to open our minds and hearts to the constant invitation to conversion. It is a continual effort to lead us to intimate communion with Jesus Christ so that we come to think like him, to judge like him and to do his will.

127. The whole Church is responsible for catechesis: though each has a different part to play, the work has to be shared by all because of our baptism which lays on each of us a personal responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ. Parents, teachers, catechists, religious, priests and bishops, together build up God's people. The family first of all, then the parish, the schools, friends and many other individual groups and organisations, contribute to the work of catechesis. Personal growth in faith is not restricted to one segment of life nor is it limited to one kind of learning. It happens through belonging to the Church and through the manifold experience of life and sharing that this belonging brings. It is fed by the sacraments, consecrated by celebration of the liturgy and deepened by prayer. It is strengthened by information and instruction, matured by reflection and discussion, and given confidence by reasoned argument. It is expressed in action, enriched by sharing and confirmed by relationships. In all these ways, catechesis contributes to the development of a rich and personal faith.

Centred on the Parish

128. Delegates to the Congress were insistent upon the importance of the parish as the natural centre and focus of all local catechetical activity. We gladly welcome that insistence. We have already described the parish as a community of people whose lives meet in the love of God through Christ, and whose unity is continually developed and affirmed by and in the celebration of the Mass. Many of the resources needed for catechesis already exist in almost every parish and could be brought into use once the need is generally recognised. Each parish should reflect on the need for a life-long process of formation for every Christian and should offer a programme of catechesis for all its members to guide them continuously to a closer union with God in Christ. There is the catechesis of daily prayer, the weekly liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments. The parish ought to have special concern for the catechesis of those with the most acute needs — the young, the elderly, the sick, the handicapped, the ethnic minority groups. But those with special responsibility for catechesis have to remember that it is not a one-way process, a generous gift from those who have to those who have not. We need not be in full possession of riches before agreeing to share and we need to remember that whenever we teach in the name of the Lord we indeed give but receive as well.
129. The priest alone will be unable to carry out this programme of catechesis. He will need to be helped by trained voluntary catechists

who may eventually be commissioned for this work by the bishop. Here is an apostolate, we would suggest, to which religious also can contribute with great effect. Dioceses and deaneries may like to give thought to the appointment of full-time co-ordinators of catechesis in deanery areas and perhaps ultimately in parishes. While diocesan catechetical centres are now firmly established, the intensification and extension of the programme of catechesis may well require the establishment of deanery centres to support the work.

130. If the parish is to be a genuine centre for catechesis, great attention must be paid to the liturgy. The parish Mass is a magnificent opportunity for catechesis — not just through the homily but through the whole experience of community celebration. The Mass is a sign of our faith and many things contribute to this sign: the way in which each section of the community takes part, how the scriptures are read, the singing, the warmth (of building as well as people), the aptness of the bidding prayers, the dignity of the serving, the quality of the homily and the attention that is paid to the natural catechetical pattern of the lectionary.
131. The celebration of the sacraments also offers particular opportunities for catechesis, especially as the sacraments are offered to people at moments of heightened awareness and need. The Congress noted this and we endorse it as part of any approach to Christian catechesis. Baptism is an occasion for the instruction of parents and god-parents. When children approach the sacraments of the eucharist and reconciliation for the first time it is their parents who, being closest to them, can best prepare them. Such preparation should be shared by the community, and the parish and the school should have part in it. A particular method strongly recommended for this preparation is the 'catechumenal' model. In this, parents, teachers, catechists and priests co-operate with the children in a programme of instruction and celebration. This ensures both the sound preparation of the children and the continuing formation of the adult community to which they belong. Preparation for the sacrament of confirmation offers similar opportunities for catechesis and calls for close co-operation between parish and school. Some delegates to the Congress proposed that the age for confirmation should be raised and put forward strong arguments to support their recommendation. It has been pointed out that there are also strong theological arguments for the celebration of the sacrament at an earlier age. The existing practice varies from place to place, and further study is needed before a clear decision as to age can be made. Nonetheless we recognise that when confirmation is celebrated with an older age group its missionary aspect should be duly stressed.

132. The family is a witnessing community since a marriage exists to foster the Christian life of men and women. The whole Church, as we have already said, must give priority to the adequate preparation of engaged couples and to the continued support and inspiration of married couples, so that they in their turn may strengthen and help their children and the local neighbourhood. The work of Catholic organisations concerned with the deepening and support of family life is to be encouraged but the daily sustaining of marriages must be the responsibility of the parish as a whole. Other key moments in our lives which provide opportunities for catechesis include the death of those close to us, times of sickness, the beginning of work or of retirement, and moments of crisis and of celebration. We must learn to be sensitive to such events, which can so readily lead to a deepening of faith and to a richer sense of belonging to the Church.
133. In dioceses we support the eventual setting up of associations of parish catechists. We also recommend to catechists the recently formed National Catechetical Association. We propose that in their preparation and use catechetical programmes be checked for authenticity by reference to the General Catechetical Directory (nn. 47-69).

The Role of Our Schools

134. The Catholic school, both primary and secondary, is of inestimable value to the life of the Church in England and Wales. Whatever new educational priorities may emerge we must neither belittle the contribution which the schools have made in the past nor underestimate their potential for the Church now or in the future. The Catholic school must provide an experience of a living and worshipping community, and in this way contribute to the entry of its members into the full life of the Church. It should be so inspired by the gospel that it is seen to be a genuine alternative to other forms of schooling. There are many questions which we need to ask about the Catholic school if it is to fulfil its role as a gospel-inspired community. How will its structure differ from those of other schools? What will be distinctive about its discipline? How will it convey Christian ideas of justice? What relationships should it encourage between pupils, staffs and parents? How will its curriculum differ from that of other schools? The bishops have already commissioned a report on Catholic Education and it is hoped that this report will help us to answer these and other questions.
135. As bishops we have continually to pay attention to how the school can be supported and how it can be helped to achieve a distinctive style of life and education rooted in the gospel. The quality of

religious teaching, the upgrading of Religious Education departments, the availability of adequate teaching resources, the calibre of the staff, the relationship of the school to the local church, regular visiting by local clergy, the appointment and training of chaplains, opportunities for in-service training, the use of the premises by the local community, the education of the handicapped, are all matters that call for our sympathetic, careful and generous guidance. The Congress expressed similar concerns when it asked for a regular review of Catholic schools in order to ensure faithfulness to their original aims and objectives.

136. The school is the servant of the local community and it has the task of showing itself educationally, pastorally and spiritually a true asset to the neighbourhood. In particular the school — like the Church itself — has special responsibility for those who are most in need. Here again we would draw attention to those who are handicapped or disadvantaged in some way. There seems to be some lack of awareness of the situation. We wish to encourage in each diocese as well as nationally close attention to the catechesis of the handicapped in school and in parish. We must recognise the limitations of the school. Expectations of the religious education that may be given, and of the growth in the faith of its pupils, must be realistic. The school cannot be expected to do what of its very nature it cannot do alone — produce the fully-committed member of the Church. It cannot take the place of a Christian home and it needs the support of other catechetical agencies. Yet prominent among those things which can be expected of a Catholic school are a knowledge and understanding of the content of the faith, the experience of a Christian caring community, and the experience of a living liturgy. We shall consider the recommendation from the Congress about the provision of a common core Religious Education curriculum for national use. All Religious Education syllabuses in use in Catholic schools should be officially authorised by the Ordinary or his delegate.
137. The support needed by the school is provided by the whole community, but the Governors have the first responsibility. We urge that, in accordance with the recent Education Act, men and women be carefully selected for this important work and that each diocese arrange appropriate training for them. They should regularly visit the schools and meet pupils, parents and teachers. They are responsible for the appointment of staff, and for Catholic schools they need to do everything possible to secure the appointment of teachers who are fully committed to the values of Catholic education, and who live accordingly. Governors should encourage staff to attend in-service courses in religious education both for their personal

enrichment as Christians and to help them in the classroom. They should ensure that the Religious Education department is properly established and professionally staffed, and they should try to develop close links between the school and the principal contributory parishes. They can do much to help the school become a true community of faith. For the support of teachers of religion there is in every diocese an Adviser on Religious Education, often backed by a diocesan Catechetical Centre. The value of these centres is already well proven and it is to be hoped that resources will be available for their further development. It will be useless for us to have built schools if we are not prepared to provide supporting facilities that will enable them to develop well as Catholic schools. In addition we urge Governors to encourage the fullest possible use of their school premises for the benefit of the Catholic and the local communities. While out-of-school use of the premises inevitably requires careful planning and may sometimes entail additional effort for those who work in the school daily, we have to remember that our duty is to serve local needs as generously as possible.

138. We recognise the importance of school chaplains and have already received the *Memorandum on School Chaplains* prepared by the Department of Catechetics (1979). We accept the need to appoint trained chaplains to Catholic secondary schools if these schools are adequately to fulfil their role within the Church. However, we have to acknowledge that not every priest is suited to this work and that local shortages may make it difficult to find the right man. Just as religious orders were formed in the past for the work of education, the needs of today might suggest that it would be appropriate at this time for the foundation of an association whose members would devote themselves to chaplaincy work in schools, colleges and universities. In any case, there is a clear role for religious sisters and brothers in chaplaincy teams. For over a hundred years Church schools have taken their place alongside County schools in what is known as the Dual System. We believe that this system, by which the State recognises and supports the right of parents to choose a denominational school for their children, is of great value to education in these countries. We pay tribute to those politicians, educationalists and members of the Church who have done so much to develop and maintain the system and we appreciate the support for Catholic schools expressed by the Congress. The contribution made by the Church in terms of finance is still considerable; we must never fail to back our material contribution by one in terms of dedication, Christian values and educational excellence, and to co-operate to the full with local and national educational authorities.

139. We acknowledge the long history of dedication on the part of Religious Orders and Congregations, priests and laity in the establishment of Catholic schools both in the independent and maintained sectors, and express our deep gratitude to them. We recognise the sacrifices made by religious on many occasions in assisting in the reorganisation of Catholic schools. We encourage all those who teach in Catholic schools to find in their task the call of the Church to co-operate with us in the work of teaching the gospel.

Higher Education

140. The presence of the Church in tertiary education is considerable but still largely undervalued. There are a number of Catholic Colleges of Higher Education (formerly Teacher Training Colleges); Heythrop College holds a respected position as a Theological School of London University; Plater College likewise does valuable work for social and political education; the four major seminaries all have links, more or less close, with other tertiary education institutes; the university chaplaincies care for large numbers of university students and staff throughout the country. Nonetheless it appears that the Church's role in this important educational field is still in its infancy. The Congress emphasised the need for adequate preparation of those entering tertiary education. We willingly endorse recommendations for religious education courses specifically designed to prepare fifth and sixth formers for entry into tertiary education; for closer liaison between secondary and tertiary education; and for contact between schools, parishes and chaplaincies about new students — having due regard always for the wishes of students themselves. There is need for specially trained chaplains. We already have provision for pastoral care in higher education. We hope to develop a national policy also for those in higher education. We welcome the possibility of a team of chaplains who, like the Caring Church teams that have done such good work in secondary schools, might be able to do similar missionary work in places of tertiary education. It seems impossible to provide chaplains for all such institutes and we therefore wish to encourage closer links between local parishes and individual students.
141. We hope also that those Catholics who teach in universities, polytechnics and other tertiary education institutes will be encouraged to look for ways in which they can help their Catholic students. It is the task of Christians to witness to their faith according to their gifts and opportunities. Members of staff who know their students can give a real Christian example by their active presence,

by their willingness to listen and answer questions, by their counsel and — more rarely — by directly evangelising and catechising. It is important for chaplains to have close contacts with the academic staff who can provide the continuity which is so important, but so tenuous at this level of education.

142. Catholic colleges and university chaplaincies have a special contribution to make. By being communities of faith they can provide a marvellous contact for growth in faith and practice. They can encourage the young adult to come to grips with his faith in a way that is often impossible for a younger person still at school. There is opportunity for theological exploration, for facing problems of unbelief and moral uncertainty, and for a development from childish faith to a mature understanding and acceptance of God. By offering Christian presence without pressure, and adult security without strings, they can be of special help to those who have lapsed from the practice of the faith. The celebration of the liturgy is of great importance, as is the provision of a catechesis appropriate to the students' development. We ask college authorities to study some of the other proposals from the Congress, especially those of particular concern to their students who are preparing for effective witness in the life of the wider community, namely, those dealing with matters connected with war, peace, international justice and human rights, and about multi-racial, multi-cultural studies and world development issues. Our colleges and chaplaincies need to be available for a wider group than their own students. In particular we hope that their use as centres for the in-service training of teachers and of priests, as well as for adult Christian education will be fully explored by the appropriate authorities.
143. We commend the Chaplains to the Forces for their work of instructing and forming those in their charge. We wish to encourage parishes to give what assistance they can to promote this work.
144. The educational scene is a circular one: the quality of teaching in the schools depends to a great extent on the professional qualities of the teacher. The effectiveness of teaching at tertiary level depends in large measure on the quality of the students who enter tertiary education. It is good to note that there is an increasing number of sixth formers taking religious studies or theology at GCE 'A' level and who subsequently read theology at university. This development needs to be strongly encouraged because it is likely that an output of theology graduates will increase significantly the number and quality of specialist religious education teachers. It is our aim to have in every secondary school a Religious Education department

led by a specialist religious education graduate. If this aim is to be realised, large numbers of theology graduates will be required. Given the pastoral and catechetical needs of those involved in tertiary education, we must consider carefully the possibility of the expansion of the Department for Catholics in Higher Education.

Life-long Formation

145. The last Synod of Bishops taught us clearly about the absolute priority of a continuing adult formation and education in the faith. The catechesis of adults 'is the principal form of catechesis because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. The Christian community cannot carry out a permanent catechesis without the direct and skilled participation of adults, whether as receivers or as promoters of catechetical activity' (*Catechesi tradendae*, n. 43). Adult education in the faith has to do with the recognition of the worth and dignity of each individual as a follower of Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. The continuing Christian education and formation of adult members of the Church must become a priority in our Church's educational labours. Any genuine renewal of the life and work of the Church will in the end largely depend upon commitment to this work. The precise way forward is not yet plain, but it is obvious that we must walk in this direction. We willingly accept the practical implications of this decision, including the allocation of personnel and resources that may be proved necessary.
146. Any educational programme must fulfil a real need. The needs of the adult Christian are evidenced in various ways, and embrace both religious and human growth, so that individuals are challenged to develop every one of their talents to the utmost. Individuals too have a variety of roles as parents, citizens, workers, employers or members of communities. They must be helped to fill these roles. We start from where people are: their desire to meet with others for prayer and study; their hope to share with their children in their preparation for the sacraments; their concern for religious education in their children's schools; their puzzlement about change in the Church; their wish to become more involved in the life of the parish; their anxiety about inflation, unemployment or housing. All these needs indicate how adult education programmes can be begun, at the parish and local level, to answer immediate needs. This is something basic and does not require vast resources. It calls almost entirely on local talent and uses local facilities. The model for much of this activity is that suggested in the *Acts of the Apostles*: 'They

remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers' (Acts 2:42). The context for this can often be the House Mass or the small group meeting for prayer and study.

147. There can be no priority more urgent, no effort more worthwhile, than the slow, patient work of forming lay people for their unique and irreplaceable task. Disappointments and frustrations will abound but nothing should deflect bishops or priests from the task of calling, forming and sustaining Christians who are deeply committed to Christ and who will express this commitment in the whole of their lives. Catholic lay people are beginning to take it for granted that they are consulted on matters of pastoral importance. Now in the aftermath of the Congress and its clear call to individuals to play their full part in the mission of the Church, our main emphasis must be on formation of adults for mission. We recognise too that those responsible for such programmes of formation will themselves be in need of formation and training. We, as bishops with our clergy, religious and full-time collaborators, must be part of this process whereby the whole Church in our lands is led by the Spirit of God into renewal and an ever-deeper commitment to mission. Formation has therefore to be flexible and adapted to the diverse needs of clergy and laity of all ages, since formation is of course life-long and never considered to be complete. The Church must examine its resources and the opportunities already afforded by the State's adult education system, diocesan centres and study groups. Religious orders should be asked to examine how they can contribute their expertise and skills to lay formation for all kinds of ministry. We are already rich in resources of people and buildings. What we lack are practical programmes carefully prepared to implement our vision and drawing on every modern technique.
148. In considering programmes for adult catechesis we can learn, from the many courses that take place for adults in different dioceses in the country, what best answers their needs. It is not enough merely to note starting points; we have to build on these starting points so as to offer a coherent catechesis. It has been suggested that *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* provides a suitable programme. We endorse this suggestion and urge those responsible in our dioceses for adult Christian education to adapt this programme for their own situation.
149. Customarily the work of formation for adult laity has been undertaken within our Catholic societies and apostolic organisations. In many cases the formation was of a general character, doctrinal as

well as spiritual. In some societies it has been related to the profession of their members. Perhaps because of the post-conciliar concentration upon parish and diocesan structures, where lay commitment has been encouraged on a broad if local basis, the membership of many of these lay organisations has fallen sharply. There are signs of their resurgence and this we welcome. We gladly acknowledge the outstanding contribution to the life of our Church given in recent years by lay leaders who received their formation within Church lay organisations. Today the parishes have great need to draw on the experience of these organisations, which, perhaps at the cost of a diminished membership, can give service to the whole Church by the provision of personnel and printed material to assist in the general work of formation in the local Church. As new generations of laity are drawn into the Church's apostolate they will themselves see that membership of such organisations is not so much a cause for support as a further means of effective fulfilment of the commitment they have learned. One of the fruits of the National Pastoral Congress has been the experience of the support that laity and clergy can be to each other. This is nowhere more true than in the continuing formation that every adult Christian, lay person or priest, needs. It is suggested, therefore, that at least parts of the in-service training of the clergy should be carried out with lay people.

150. At the heart of all education and formation is community. Consequently we believe that an important element of all adult education is a lived experience of community. Frequently a parish is too large for its members to know each other and be known individually. If individuals can first find themselves in a small group where personal relations are possible, a sense of community is created which helps them to relate to the larger parish. Even then community does not grow spontaneously. Good communication must be developed within the small group in order to create community, and then between groups to develop the unity of the parish. It is often at this point that the sense of community breaks down. Parishes should feel like an extended family but they often do not, precisely because the small group is not fostered and there is a breakdown in good communication at this level. The reasons are not hard to find.
151. Communication is more than relaying messages; it is a mutual exchange by which individuals share knowledge, experience and attitudes. The message has to be given clearly and then the listener has to be able to react. This opportunity for feedback marks the difference between mere information and genuine communication.

If we are to develop the parish as a community, there must be some way in which parishioners can respond to their priests in a genuine dialogue. Our Church has not yet thought out sufficiently how to do this in practice. Certainly priests, lay leaders and religious ought to receive, during their formation, training in personal communicating skills. If they can help to create community in this way it will benefit each individual Catholic.

Diocesan and National Support

152. These small beginnings of adult education and formation at parish level need support and guidance from the local diocese. We hope that wherever practical there can be set up an adequately staffed Adult Education Centre whose task it will be to advise those working at the local level, to train leaders for this work and to plan more substantial courses than local organisers may be able to manage. We commend the pilot work already under way in various dioceses and look forward to its development. In particular we urge that much thought be given to ways and means of reaching those who would never consider attending a formal course of lectures, but whose need for growth in faith, understanding and spirituality is as great as that of anyone else.
153. A recommendation put forward by almost every group concerned with education is the setting up of a National Pastoral Institute. At this juncture we are not in a position to do more than note the suggestion. As we have indicated earlier in Section I of this part of our Message, it may well be desirable to link pastoral, liturgical and catechetical needs in one national centre. It is clearly a recommendation of great importance. But it may be more effective and prudent to develop and co-ordinate the work done already in diocesan Pastoral Centres.
154. The field of adult Christian education is one particularly appropriate for the development of ecumenical activity. It helps Christian unity to gather momentum where the formation and education of adults is undertaken jointly by Catholics and other Christians.
155. Our educational heritage is indeed rich. We are deeply grateful for the vision and work of those who have gone before us. We see our present responsibilities clearly: to provide continuing formation and education in faith for all adults and to develop catechesis of the young in home, parish and school. At the centre is Jesus Christ, teacher and supreme catechist. It is he who will speak to adult and child alike on their pilgrim journey.

SECTION III.

WITNESSING TO CHRIST IN THE WORLD: CHRISTIAN WITNESS AND JUSTICE

'Each baptised person is called to participate actively in the Church's mission so that in our day she may make her presence felt in action'

— POPE JOHN PAUL II to the Congress

156. The Church is in the world and exists for the world. It can never accept a role so narrowly spiritual that its prophetic voice in preaching the fulness of the gospel is silent or that leads its members to renounce their involvement in society. On the contrary, the Second Vatican Council declared that the Church is 'to be a leaven, and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 40). The created world, all human society and every individual are redeemed by Christ. They each express in an incoherent and obscure way the glory of God 'which fills all heaven and earth'. The individual Christian and the people of God can, with the eyes of faith, discern the image of God and the face of Christ in the world and in people. It is the mission of the Christian and of the Catholic Church to point to the divine likeness in God's creation, to denounce whatever defaces it and to protect and foster within created reality the true and the divine. Living as he does within the human community, the Christian helps continually to transform society into the family of God. This teaching is profoundly significant. It does away with the image of a closed-in Church, having remote mission to an alien and fallen world 'out there'. It creates an awareness of our presence in a redeemed world and our responsibility for that world.
157. The Council taught us that the Church is a sign and a sacrament of mankind's communion with God and so of unity among men. Its tasks are thus derived from its inmost nature as an effective sign of reconciliation and community. It is the concern of the Church 'to communicate divine life to men', but also 'to cast the reflected light of that divine life over all the earth' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 40). It does this by healing whatever has been wounded by injustice and sin and by helping to raise individuals to the level of their rightful dignity. It is committed to build unity, community and brotherhood among all people. In this work of healing and rebuilding, the Church and its members should stand in the sight of the world as a sign that contradicts merely material or economic considerations and that gives witness to human and gospel values.

158. Within the Congress there was an obvious affirmation of this vision of the Church's mission. The people of God in England and Wales has a responsibility of Christian witness in society and of sanctifying from within the world of work and politics. It must struggle for justice in the world and for peace among men. It must labour for the development of all people equally. It has to help to transform society into community. It must witness to the value of all human life and the Christian meaning and purpose of created things and material wealth. These were clear objectives and from the Congress sectors on Christian Witness and Justice there was an abundance of resolutions designed to secure their implementation. Within the compass of this Message it would be unrealistic for us, as bishops, to attempt an adequate treatment of all these proposals about social justice. We are anxious, however, to establish certain principles and to indicate the depth of our commitment to them.
159. Experience teaches that not all Christians respond in an identical fashion when gospel values, which are honoured in the abstract, are applied to specific situations. We recognise that it is frequently difficult to establish the facts of any given situation and that however careful the analysis, the result will be challenged and may prove divisive. There will be differences in interpretation of what is politically possible and desirable. Principles may be sacred but their application will vary according to a person's knowledge, experience and political philosophy. We appreciate and uphold the fact that Catholics in these countries have felt free in the past to support any of the major political parties other than the Communist party. Indeed Catholic lay men and women are to be found prominently within any of these parties. This party political freedom has been interpreted by some as neutrality on the part of the Church so that it has been argued that the so-called 'institutional' Church should avoid any political involvement. Whilst not allowing itself to be identified with any political party or pressure group, it would nevertheless be impossible for the Church to be faithful to its mission without being deeply concerned in the conduct of human affairs.
160. The Second Vatican Council declared: 'The Church by reason of her role and competence, is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system. It is at once the sign and safeguard of the transcendental dimension of the human person . . . By preaching the truths of the gospel and clarifying all sectors of human activity through its teaching and the witness of its members, the Church respects the political freedom and responsibility of the citizen' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 76). All members of the Church must therefore witness freely and fearlessly to gospel values and

denounce oppression and injustice without regard to party political allegiances. We must be prepared to work with others of good will in the achievement or preservation of justice and the well-being of the civil community.

161. The precise role of the Church and that of Catholics generally in secular matters was expressed in the Second Vatican Council in this way: 'It is of supreme importance, especially in a pluralistic society, to work out a proper vision of the relationship between the political community and the Church, and to distinguish clearly between the activities of Christians, acting individually or collectively in their own name as citizens guided by the dictates of a Christian conscience, and their activity acting along with their pastors in the name of the Church' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 76). According to this understanding of the different but complementary ministries of the Church, it is for the pastors of the Church, the bishops and their priests, to help to form a laity properly equipped to apply Christian values to the affairs of society. 'Pastors have the duty to set forth clearly the principles concerning the purpose of creation and the use to be made of this world, and to provide moral and spiritual help for the renewal of the temporal order in Christ. Laymen ought to take on themselves as their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order. Guided by the light of the gospel and the mind of the Church, prompted by Christian love, they should act in this domain in a direct way and in their own specific manner' (*Decree on the Laity*, n. 7).
162. One of the lessons of the Congress must surely be, therefore, that, as bishops, we should take urgent steps to encourage again in our territory the study and development of the Church's social teaching, and to ensure that such teaching is treated as a priority in all programmes of adult education and formation. The social teachings of the Church must be recognised as an essential part of its doctrine and be presented in the upper forms of our secondary schools in a way which will instruct and inspire young people to assume their responsibilities in the community. We ask the Catholic laity, individually and with others, to try to review their political and social concern in the light of the gospel and the Church's doctrine, to see how to translate principle into practice, and where possible to consider seriously how to take their place within civic and political life. Many of our worker movements have made an outstanding contribution in this way in past generations. Without themselves adopting party political stances, the lay organisations of today must also consider whether they need to do more in the realm of formation for this important aspect of the Church's social mission.

Witness to Christ in the World of Work

163. The Church teaches clearly that God has called his people 'to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 43). In taking their place actively in civic and public life at local and national level, as the Congress suggested, Catholics should realise the importance of playing a conscientious and self-sacrificing part in the life of the community. In this way they may achieve positions where they are able to work effectively for the promotion of justice and the rejection of solutions unacceptable to the Christian conscience. This applies to many sectors of civic life and not least to the world of work itself. Most people spend a large part of their time at work but it would seem from the reports submitted in advance of the Congress that many practising Catholics are unused to making a conscious link between their faith and their daily work. All men and women are called to labour with the talents they have been given to advance the coming of God's kingdom on earth and to bring creation to fulfilment. Work can be a service to our fellow men directly or it can be undertaken to create wealth which can then be distributed to serve their needs. Sadly, working conditions and poor industrial relations often make the world of work a challenge to faith rather than a positive and creative opportunity for Christian fulfilment.
164. At the Congress relatively little attention seems to have been paid to some of the basic economic and ethical principles which are at the heart of social justice. The general issues of the creation and distribution of wealth, and the principles of just pay for a just day's work, appear to have remained largely without consideration. Whilst the importance of the role of the Christian in industry was stressed, with some emphasis on the problems facing women and young people at work, little emerged in the reports on the major questions posed by such matters as industrial relations, the breakdown of trade agreements, the influence and role of employers' associations and trade unions, the economic and party-political considerations often relevant in wage-negotiations, and the consequences to the rest of the community of strikes and other restrictive practices. These are critical issues at this time. Perhaps the apparent reticence of the delegates in these matters reflects the fact that the Church nationally does not appear to possess at present adequate machinery for formulating and presenting informed advice and comment on important issues of social justice. This is a defect which we should like to see remedied and to which we will give our attention after consulting further the appropriate commissions of our Bishops' Conference. In any case, it may well be a matter best tackled ecumenically with other Churches.

165. Congress delegates did, however, recommend that the Church speak out clearly on the social injustice of unemployment and that it should try to contribute to a positive response to present-day problems. As in so many parts of the world at this time, unemployment in Britain is a steadily increasing tragedy. It affects some areas more acutely than others and it has particularly severe consequences for young people, more especially those from ethnic minority groups who are always disadvantaged in such circumstances. Quite apart from the consequences of declared financial policies aimed at the reduction of inflation, the next few years are bound to see fresh redundancies connected with the introduction of advanced technology into industry. Clearly the advent of micro-electronics presents many exciting challenges and opportunities. But there is little indication that the skilled jobs micro-technology may create can offset the widespread redundancies it is likely to cause. Urgent action is needed to secure the re-training of those who will inevitably be displaced as their jobs cease to exist. Solutions will only be achieved if both sides of industry are prepared to discuss in advance the consequences of this latest phase in the industrial revolution. Widespread unemployment must inevitably have grave social implications for family life. Here is another sphere in which the Church, priests and people, must work to secure a solution which really is to the benefit of the community. At a local level something can be done to ease the situation by such measures as the creation of socially useful jobs, by the making of premises available for training workshops, by the development of co-operatives and by the organisation of leisure centres for the unemployed. But it would seem that there will have to be in the next few years a radical re-thinking of the whole nature of work and employment. Nor should we overlook the consequences to the Third World of the heavy financial involvement required through investment in the development of micro-technology in industry and commerce, not to mention the personal expenditure of individuals in introducing new technological gadgetry into their homes and domestic lives. If the principles of Christian family life are to be served and social justice honoured, there will be a very important part for our Catholic laity to play in this rapidly developing technological scene.

A Just and Peaceful World

166. The International Synod of Bishops in 1971 declared that working for justice is a constitutive element of preaching the gospel. Pope John Paul II has written: 'The Church cannot remain insensible to whatever serves man's true welfare, any more than she can remain

insensible to what threatens it' (*Redemptor hominis*, n. 30). Even more recently the Brandt Report has stated that today we face the challenge of three thousand million of our brothers and sisters living in dire poverty, and nearly 25 million children under the age of five dying each year from hunger and disease. As bishops of the dioceses of England and Wales, we affirm solemnly and without qualification our deep concern for and commitment to the poor and the powerless both at home and throughout the world. We cannot accept that this concern and commitment should remain for ever incapable of realisation. Our Lord says that people will be judged by him according to their attitude towards the poor and needy. We urge Catholics to work, in whatever way is open to them, for the necessary transformation of whatever structures and institutions prevent people throughout the world from living fully human lives. We accept confidently yet humbly the practical consequences of our belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. For this reason we acknowledge the responsibility which rests with the people of God and with each individual to work for a more just distribution of the world's goods and resources, for more comprehensive programmes of sharing our wealth with others in greater need, and for the adoption by individuals and communities of a simpler and more just life-style. We must also be aware of our responsibility for the whole of our environment, the created world which God has entrusted to our care and of which we are merely stewards, accountable to the Creator for the use we make of it.

167. This is a profoundly Christian vision and indicates the true quality of human life. It influences our belief that redemption necessarily involves the struggle to achieve full human development. In our careful consideration of the very detailed recommendations made by the Congress, we shall keep in mind not only the need for a greater and more widespread understanding of the issues of justice in our lives today but also the need to find the right means for more effective action. In particular we will study the recommendation that each diocese should appoint a full-time worker for justice and peace and should create its own diocesan commission to promote active interest in this vital subject.
168. Led by the Second Vatican Council and successive Popes the Church has articulated and supported the hopes of ordinary people everywhere for peace. Each year Catholics now celebrate an international Day of Peace and we gladly accept the plea from the Congress that Peace Sunday should be made a major event both liturgically and educationally. At a time in our history of exceptional dangers to world peace and of national concern about the morality of nuclear

warfare and deterrence, we urge the widespread study of these complex issues and of the guidance already provided by the Church. We recall especially the words of the Holy Father in his message for Peace Sunday last January when he wrote: 'The desire for peace does not cause the man of peace to shut his eyes to the tension, injustice and strife that are part of our world. He looks at them squarely. He calls them by their proper name, out of respect for truth. And since he is closely attuned to the things of peace, he is necessarily all the more sensitive to whatever is inconsistent with peace. This impels him to push courageously ahead and investigate the real causes of evil and injustice, in order to look for appropriate remedies'.

169. In our search for peace we ourselves have constantly to think of the major objective of multi-lateral disarmament. It seems right at this time to recall the forceful statement of the Second Vatican Council regarding total war and the arms race. 'Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation . . . Therefore, we declare once again: the arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured. And there is every reason to fear that if it continues it will bring forth those lethal disasters which are already in preparation . . . It is our clear duty to spare no effort in order to work for the moment when all war will be completely outlawed by international agreement'. (*Gaudium et spes*, nn. 80, 81, 82). In the light of these statements, we ourselves made the following declaration in October 1978. 'In support of the United Nations' stated ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales calls on Her Majesty's Government to implement a programme of negotiations designed to produce international agreements as follows:

- (a) to bring about a balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments;
- (b) to eliminate the development and production of all chemical weapons;
- (c) to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race until total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems has been achieved;
- (d) to prohibit the development, production or use of other weapons of mass destruction;
- (e) to examine alternative uses of our industrial capacity so as to control and curtail the production and sale of armaments to other countries.'

This declaration still represents our concern for a realistic approach to the vital issue of arms control and disarmament. We would also say that we are deeply concerned about the morality involved in the possession of the nuclear deterrent and we are currently engaged in a study of this complex problem. We view with grave anxiety the enormous increase in the cost of defence. This raises disturbing moral questions when, as we have noted above, so many in the world are in such dire need.

170. Inevitably, as in any great coming together of Christians in these islands, deep concern and distress were expressed about the situation in Northern Ireland. We fully acknowledge the responsibility which we all share in trying to help in the achievement of a lasting and peaceful solution to this issue. Our experience also shows that the full glare of publicity seldom helps whatever effective contribution we have at various times attempted to make in the achievement of justice and peace in such an embittered situation. It is for this reason that we do not feel able to make an unqualified commitment to accept the appeal from Congress delegates 'to convene jointly with other Church leaders a major conference on Northern Ireland in the near future'. But we will discuss this suggestion further with our brethren in Ireland and Scotland and with other Church leaders. We shall continue to seek the best way forward.
171. At this time we make our own the appeal for peace issued by Pope John Paul II at Drogheda on September 29, 1979. In particular we call attention to these extracts from his words: 'Christianity understands and recognises the noble and just struggle for justice: Christianity is decisively opposed to fomenting hatred and to promoting or provoking violence or struggle for the sake of struggle. The command "Thou shalt not kill" must be binding on the conscience of humanity, if the terrible tragedy and destiny of Cain is not to be repeated . . . To all who bear political responsibility for the affairs of Ireland, I want to speak with the same urgency and intensity with which I have spoken to the men of violence. Do not cause or condone or tolerate conditions which give excuse or pretext to men of violence. Those who resort to violence always claim that only violence brings about change. They claim that political action cannot achieve justice. You politicians must prove them to be wrong. You must show that there is a peaceful political way to justice. You must show that peace achieves the work of justice and violence does not . . . Let this fervent prayer for peace penetrate with light our consciences. Let it purify them and take hold of them'.

Respect for Human Rights

172. Our concern for justice must embrace the human dignity of individuals and their rights. We believe that every person is made in the image of God and is of unique value in his eyes. Yet people are under threat in different ways in every part of the world. There are sustained attacks on the human rights of individuals and of groups. For some it means imprisonment, torture or exile. For others it means unemployment, discrimination and hardship of many kinds. For yet others it means loss of their religious liberty. Abuses exist in Communist regimes, in military dictatorships and in democracies. We wish to express our continuing concern for all those who suffer in the Church of Silence and to call attention once more to the plight of prisoners of conscience. Every denial of religious liberty and of human rights is an attack on human dignity and must be unambiguously condemned. We know that much is already being undertaken by individuals and groups in the defence of human rights. We encourage and support the universal compassion they express. We trust that our people will play their part in this most important work.
173. Western Europe this century has twice suffered the havoc of war. The European Economic Community owes its existence largely to the passionate determination of many people that its nations should never again come into armed conflict. The Catholic Church has a unique role to play in Europe. Historically it helped to create within different nations a common culture and a heritage of spiritual and moral values. To some extent, and in many parts of Europe, the Catholic Church still remains its Christian soul. Its presence and its influence create a moral and spiritual unity between East and West. In England and Wales, Catholics have not, in general, developed a strong sense of being spiritually and religiously part of Europe. Yet we are placed in a particularly strong position to contribute to the causes of peace and continuing reconciliation. We can, in our own way, develop links with the Church throughout Western Europe and, wherever possible, in Eastern Europe. Within the countries of the E.E.C. Catholics can also provide a constant witness to the needs of the Third World, and encourage governments to tackle seriously the economic problems which beset the Southern hemisphere, and which indeed, as the Brandt Report tells us, may react gravely on the wellbeing of the Northern hemisphere.
174. Human dignity is threatened in our domestic society by poverty and injustice of whatever kind. Local churches and parishes, as well as individual Catholics should be constantly alert to the needs of the

poor, of those who suffer discrimination and of those who are powerless. Christians of every Church and tradition, together with men and women of other faiths and of good will, can find common cause in attempting to transform local and national society into a community which cares for all its citizens equally. Of special concern must be the increasing number of those dependent on the excessive use of drugs and alcohol. They need our understanding and our care. We accept such matters as a major pastoral priority with a realisation that initiatives will have to be studied, implemented or developed for specific groups of those in need. The elderly, the homeless, the handicapped and disabled, single-parent families, travelling people, seafarers and their families, prisoners and their dependents are amongst those whose needs ought to be at the heart of our Christian concern.

175. In Britain today there is still widespread debate about immigration and acute problems about our ethnic minorities and racial groups, particularly in some of our inner cities. There is clear evidence of discrimination and prejudice on the basis of race and colour. This must continue to be a pressing concern to us. We look forward to the day when members of these minority groups will take their rightful place in the ordained ministries of the Church and in religious orders, and in positions of responsibility and influence in society. As bishops we have already declared: 'We must recognise the fundamental human dignity of each individual and preserve a real concern for everyone involved, but particularly for minority communities in our midst and for those who are vulnerable and insecure' (*Declaration on the Revision of British Nationality Law*, 1979). Britain has become irreversibly a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. We believe that as Catholic Christians we must reflect the awareness of this fact in our parishes and in every aspect of our life and mission. There are particular consequences for our policy on school admissions, for our study programmes, for representation on Church consultative bodies. We have to be sensitive to the particular spiritual and religious needs of ethnic minorities and to the specialised skills required of their chaplains. But a wider responsibility rests on our Catholic community as a whole. We are part of a world-wide religious family within which national, racial or cultural differences should never introduce division. We should be a living sign of the brotherhood and equality of all people in the sight of God. Prejudice and discrimination based on colour or race should be fundamentally abhorrent to us. They compromise our Catholic identity. They deface the image of Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind. That is why as a religious body we have already condemned organisations, parties or groups which inflame racial hatred.

In the public mind, the National Front stands for colour prejudice and the rejection of ethnic minorities, and we declare once more that these policies are incompatible with our Catholic beliefs. More positively we urge local Catholic churches wherever necessary to encourage better community relations and friendlier contacts with the disadvantaged.

176. Finally, and insistently, we are anxious to witness in British society today to the value and dignity of all human life. The Catholic community is identified in the public mind with our uncompromising and unwavering rejection of the evil of abortion, the destruction of unborn human life, virtually on demand. We commend to all Catholics a careful study of the statement issued in January 1980 by the Archbishops of Great Britain, and entitled *Abortion and the Right to Live*. In the foreseeable future, Catholics in our country will certainly be faced with further attempts to legalise voluntary euthanasia as the first step to more drastic measures. We see abortion and euthanasia as fundamentally opposed to the Christian vision of human life as a God-given gift for time and eternity. We would urge our dioceses and local parishes to ensure that Catholic reverence for life is consistent and all-embracing. We want to establish as a priority that the Catholic community plans the provision of adequate caring and resources for mothers and families in difficulty, and for the sick, the handicapped, and the elderly towards the end of their lives. These concerns must be part of our overall commitment to the quality of life of those in society who are poor and powerless.

SECTION IV.

THE CHALLENGING VISION: THE USE OF SPECIAL GIFTS

'I invite you all to place all your trust in God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine'.

— POPE JOHN PAUL II to the Congress.

177. The Congress was an experience of listening and of speaking. In speaking now to some groups within our Church whose special needs were stressed by delegates, we wish also to indicate our desire to talk these matters over with them locally as occasion allows. It is in a spirit of genuine dialogue, therefore, that we address these words to women, to young people, to single people, to religious and to priests. We wish to call their attention to the challenge of the vision of their role in the Church in the light of their special gifts.

178. We thank God for the many distinctive gifts and talents that women offer to the Church. Women have always played their part in the history of salvation, pre-eminently of course in the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. As baptised Christians you bring femininity as a positive gift to your mission. As fashioners of life you are aware of, and respond to, the slow maturing of people as people: you are characteristically patient and sensitive. You are capable of giving yourselves without counting the cost. Your gift of intuition makes you alive to those in need and able to respond practically and effectively. Your particular gift for relationships makes you invaluable in any attempt to create communities. We believe the time is overdue for more positive attitudes about your participation in the life of the Church and we recognise with regret that you have often been permitted to play mainly a limited, and often inferior, part in the Church. We welcome the evidence that change has already begun. Our appeal, then, is that each of you individually will feel able to use to the full your gifts, your skills and your knowledge in the life and service of the Church. Traditional and unquestioned attitudes towards women and your role may have to be changed. We ourselves and our clergy may well have to be persuaded gently of our insensitivity and our assumptions of male dominance. We suspect that on occasions you yourselves will have to be encouraged to undertake your positive role. You must not be excluded from the process of pastoral planning and decision-making. We assure you of our collaboration and support as you achieve your genuine role in the Church and society at large.
179. The Congress in its final Declaration said: 'In our young people we see both a source of vitality and hope and a challenge to the adult Church to make their witness meaningful and purposeful'. The young made their particular and valuable contribution to the Congress. But we would want all of you, young Catholics, throughout England and Wales to feel that you are the Church of today and tomorrow, that the whole Church needs you and wants you to take your rightful place. The Church is a listening as well as a teaching Church, and we can assure you that we want to hear your voice and promise that we will listen. The challenge we put before you is to follow Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. In your lives you can both discover Christ and be captivated by him. You can deepen your love for him and live out his love in your lives. You can experience Christ through prayer, worship and service. In particular you are called to serve and to give witness to other young people within your own generation. We want you to take a full share with adults in preparing the liturgy and in planning your mission of service. It is our responsibility to ensure

that you are given the opportunity to receive the formation you need for your life-long mission as Christians. We rejoice with the young delegate who at the end of the Congress said: 'This is a Church to which I can give myself with hope and joy'.

180. We have already spoken of the vocation of those who are married. We now wish to address a word to those people who are single. Whether young or old, male or female, single by choice or by circumstances, each single person has a unique opportunity to make a contribution to the Church and to society. You have a mission to fulfil, a special job fashioned by God. Like marriage, being single has its problems and its blessings. But the Church today wishes to use your particular freedom, talents and dedication in the service of others. The single life, properly understood, is a call to holiness and an invitation to serve and be part of a wider community. We want you to know that your special vocation and service in the life of the Church is understood, supported and valued.
181. Religious men and women are so characteristic of the Catholic Church and so accepted by all that they rarely receive publicly the recognition and gratitude of the local Churches and of their bishops. As we give thanks to God for the grace of the Congress, we give him thanks too for the blessings brought to the people of God by religious men and women. We affirm emphatically the value of religious life, and we acknowledge you, as religious, for what you are and not simply for what you do. We need your constant witness to evangelical virtues. You have been called by God to live in relationship through community life and contemplative prayerfulness. You receive gifts of prayer, community, freedom and availability to serve the needs of the Church and of society. These gifts can and should be shared with others. In particular, the spiritual riches of the contemplative orders need to be explored and enjoyed by the rest of the Church. As religious in parishes, you could well pioneer ways of allowing lay people to share more intimately in your life of prayer and community. We value the traditional works undertaken by religious and welcome recent innovations in apostolic mission.
182. Finally, we turn to the clergy who share our priesthood and who are pastors of the people in our name. We know that after the Second Vatican Council some of you felt your ministry threatened and your role in the Church weakened. Some did not welcome the emphasis on co-responsibility and active participation of the laity in the people of God. Your fears would have been set to rest had you witnessed at Liverpool what this teaching meant in practice. The call to co-responsibility and participation is made to you as

well. No ministry of others takes away from the proper responsibilities and service for which you are ordained. You must still be the priest set apart to preside at the Eucharist, to offer the Sacrifice, to preach the word of God, to lead and form the people for prayer, witness and service. The more active the laity, the more they are formed to understand and undertake their proper role, the more they will turn to you for your spiritual leadership, for your support, and for your sacramental priesthood. It is true that we are all called to a life-long effort of formation and Christian renewal. It is a duty the whole people of God should undertake together. We know that the Christ-given dedication and commitment of priesthood will inspire you to take with us a leap of faith into the future.

PART III: TO LIVE CHRIST'S LIFE

'Above all let us realise that the Church is a community of prayer. It is especially in prayer that Jesus unites us to himself in his work of salvation'.

— POPE JOHN PAUL II to the Congress

The New People

183. Just two hundred years ago Bishop Richard Challoner, the much-loved Vicar Apostolic of the London District, whose learning and holiness had earned him the title of 'Venerable' even in his life-time, assumed the mantle of a prophet. It was near the end of his long life and in one sense the fortunes of the Church in our land were at their lowest ebb. Fines and Penal Laws were succeeding where persecution and martyrdom had failed. The number of Catholics in England and Wales had fallen to about 70,000 and there were signs that some of the Catholic families, who had been the rock to which the local faithful clung, were in danger of coming to terms with the Establishment in order to achieve an easement of the Penal Laws. The heroic stand of nearly three centuries was in danger of disintegration.
184. It was at that stage, shortly before the Gordon Riots of 1780, that Richard Challoner foretold the coming of 'The New People'. There is no indication that he was thinking in biblical terms of the pilgrim people of God; nor indeed that he was doing more than trying to comfort his confreres who were so distressed at what seemed to be happening. But there is little doubt that the words — duly recorded in the diary of Bishop Douglass — were taken as prophecy. And so they proved to be. The next seventy years were to see added to the old Catholics who had hung on to the ancient Faith, many thousands of emigré Catholics from the continent, themselves refugees from the French penal laws. Later there were the tens of thousands who crossed from Ireland to escape the ravages of famine. And there was that glorious band of converts of the Oxford

Movement, bringing to our Church the influence and prestige of Newman and other distinguished scholars. In all this there was the God-given help of such religious as the Passionist, Fr Dominic Barberi, and the Rosminian, Fr Gentili. A great flowering of the Church took place. By 1850 the number of Catholics in England and Wales had risen to one million and the ancient Hierarchy was restored.

185. We are the heirs of those days, the 'New People' foretold by the 'Venerable' Dr Challoner: a people to whom even since 1850 a four-fold increase has been given: a people now joined by fellow Catholics from other nations — there was another great influx from Ireland in the 1950s — and from other continents, rites and cultures. At the Hierarchy Centenary Congress in 1950 Mgr Ronald Knox, preaching in Westminster Cathedral, reminded us of Newman's great sermon at Oscott for the first Provincial Synod of Westminster in 1852: 'The past has returned; the dead lives . . . The English Church was, and the English Church was not, and the English Church is again. This is a portent worthy of a cry. It is the coming in of a second spring; it is a restoration in the moral world, such as that which yearly takes places in the physical'. On that occasion now thirty years ago, Mgr Knox asked whether the Fathers at Oscott had been living in a fool's paradise. Had the vernal promise been fulfilled? He answered by showing that since 1850 the Catholic population had more than doubled — 'six times as many priests, ten times as many schools, four times as many churches'. But if the Catholic Church 'in its little walled garden' had fulfilled the promise of its spring, 'enriched, not seldom, by windfalls from next door', what about the world outside? 'Is the winter passed?' he asked. 'Is the rain over and gone?'
186. For any church, growth in size is only one measure of vitality. Building up the Body of Christ refers not so much to statistics as to a deepening of the quality of our faith and Christian life. There is also the growing awareness that we are entering a different phase of our history. As a Church we have entered the mainstream of national life and this fact creates new responsibilities and demands a new response. Our past history developed within our Church in England and Wales a sense of unity and a remarkable cohesion. Hostility, discrimination or threat caused Catholics to close ranks. Newly-arrived immigrants tended to live in neighbourhood communities. In the years following the Second World War, our Church in this land was described as 'emerging from the Catacombs'. Though there was further immigration to come, the Catholics of that time were, for the most part, doing no more than coming into their own.

187. Inevitably there have been changes. Some of the solidarity of the past has weakened as Catholics have found themselves generally accepted as part of the nation and, with the greater social mobility of today, are in evidence now at every level of society and in every part of the country. Our greater sense of identification with the life of the nation has also exposed us increasingly to religious and cultural pluralism and to some extent has led to the undermining or weakening of certain of our attitudes and standards. We can no longer build upon the social identity we knew in the past. Instead we must rely upon the kind of unity which we experienced at the National Pastoral Congress which is rooted in a deeply-experienced faith and a sense of belonging to the people of God, which transcends nationality, origins and class. As a Church, we have to face up to the new responsibilities which are ours because of our growing acceptance within the life of our country. We have to become more consciously aware of our mission to the whole of society. This accords with our renewed sense of what baptism requires of us, and it demands a greater commitment to the spiritual and moral well-being of England and Wales. Our energies cannot now be channelled simply into safeguarding the flock; the 'New People' of Challoner's vision are concerned with the whole people of today and with the challenges to the world of tomorrow.

Called to Holiness

188. As bishops, we have responsibility not only to lead but also to work for the sanctification of the dioceses committed to our care. It is our task to encourage and assist people and priests alike to respond to that universal call to holiness made by Jesus Christ and applied by the Second Vatican Council to our contemporary situation. 'The Lord Jesus, the Divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of his disciples, regardless of their situation . . . All the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fulness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted, even in this earthly society' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 40).
189. In specifying this call to holiness, no distinction is made between active and passive Christians, between 'full-time' and 'part-time' members of the Church, between leaders and the led. But sadly many people do not grow to their full stature as Christians because they have never personally realised the challenge of the gospel and have consistently undervalued their own potential. Yet St Paul states categorically: 'What God wants is for you all to be holy'

(1 Thess 4:3). Jesus himself said to the crowds in the sermon on the mount: 'You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt 5:48). The truth is that so great is the gulf between religion and life that even practising Catholics react uncomfortably to this call to perfection. Yet the challenge of Jesus Christ is clear. Holiness is possible. Holiness is required of us all because, by reason of our baptism, we have each entered into a new relationship with God our Father, into a new covenant. Holiness is for us where we are, to be achieved in the ordinary daily circumstances of our working lives. This is part of the sanctifying mission of the whole Church. The Congress delegates repeatedly stressed the need for holiness. One sector expressed it in these words: 'We resolved overwhelmingly that there must be a whole-hearted call to spiritual renewal and commitment in all of us, bishops, clergy and laity, and we recommend that all members of the Congress resolve to make that call heard, first in their own hearts, and then in the milieu in which they live'.

190. What is this 'perfection' or 'holiness' to which we are called so insistently? Many find the word 'holiness' off-putting since it sounds rarefied and more suited to monasteries and convents than to homes and workplaces or to the often humdrum routine or pressures of modern life. Others find the idea of the spiritual life an inordinately complicated one of special devotions and practices, of the acquisition of virtues, of complex levels of prayer and of ascending scales of perfection. Yet holiness or perfection is none of these things. It is the fruit of God's grace. If we read what Jesus Christ has to say in the sermon on the mount (Mt 5-7), we find that the life of the Christian disciple sketched there is a profoundly simple but challenging one. We find too that holiness is not tied up with any particular calling or walk of life or with any particular stage of life. The beatitudes speak to all, as does the call to set a good example, to respect others, to be pure, honest, forgiving and unassuming, to trust in God's love, and to treat others as we would like them to treat us. Jesus is also shown later as teaching his disciples (Mt 25:31-46) in graphic terms that entry into the kingdom of heaven will depend upon whether or not we have fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked and visited the sick and the imprisoned. Again, St Paul in his hymn to love (1 Cor 13) tells us that holiness consists in being patient, kind, unselfish and forgiving. When Jesus was asked what was the greatest thing that God required of men, he replied that it was to love God and to love one's neighbour, and at the Last Supper he gave his followers a new commandment that we should love one another as he has loved us.

191. In speaking of our duty to love God, we wish to emphasise the possibility given to all through the grace of baptism to be able to explore, through meditating on the word of God and through prayer, the mystery of God himself, whose goodness, beauty and truth we shall one day see face to face. Even now some glimpse of his 'glory' may be accorded to those who seek it, and not least to those who persevere through doubt and darkness. It is an aspect of holiness to seek to know the Father and him whom the Father has sent, and to delight in that knowledge.
192. There is no better summary of our spiritual objective as Christians than these words of the Second Vatican Council: 'The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one — that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties, must steadfastly advance along the way of the living faith, which arouses hope and works through love' (*Lumen gentium*, n. 41). There is, as we have explained, but one vision of holiness, even though it may be expressed differently in different circumstances and in answer to different responsibilities and ways of life. Different ministries do not demand different brands of holiness or spirituality: they determine the circumstances and manner in which true holiness, the approach to God, is exercised. Each of us, priest or lay person, bishop, religious or deacon, hears the same call from God. We walk with Christ along different paths to the same destiny of eternal glory. In the family, in the seminary or presbytery, on the factory floor, in the office building or schoolroom or farmer's field, it is Christ's way to follow in the circumstances of our daily life; it is not a special attitude or activity reserved for times and traditional places for prayer.
193. Nor do we forget those many people — men, women and children — whose particular calling it is to share in the sufferings of Christ. They may be handicapped physically or mentally. They may be called to endure chronic illness or recurring bouts of pain or ill-health. They may be increasingly restricted in their activity or mobility. They may be just growing old. They are all excluded to a greater or lesser extent from social life, work or voluntary activities. For the whole or for a large part of their lives they make up, as St Paul wrote, what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ. We can never properly assess their value to the Church. We recognise, however, that their contribution of patience and courage is an integral part of the life of the Church and so of the Church's mission. The bishops

of the Second Vatican Council sent a message to the poor, the sick and the suffering. We gladly make it our own: 'Christ will not do away with suffering. He did not even wish to unveil to us entirely the mystery of suffering. He took suffering on himself and this is enough to make you understand all its value. All of you who feel heavily the weight of the cross, you who are poor and abandoned, you who weep, you who are persecuted for justice, you who are ignored, you the unknown victims of suffering, take courage. You are the preferred children of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of hope, happiness and life, you are the brothers of the suffering Christ and with him, if you wish, you are saving the world'.

194. In our very different lives, then, we reach the eternal glory to which God calls us. If we are open to his Spirit, faithful to his will, worshippers in truth, and if we lovingly accept suffering, set-backs and powerlessness, we must surrender obediently to his 'death' if we are to rise to his 'new life'. As St Paul explains: 'Always, wherever we may be, we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may always be seen in our body' (2 Cor 4:10). Our life as Christians is a growing into the likeness of Christ who died and rose again to a new kind of existence. It is for each one of us a life-long process, making us other Christs while at the same time forming us into Christ; leading us through our membership of the Church to build up the Body of Christ. Formation in holiness is a personal thing, rightly adapted to our circumstances and our potential. But the model, the inspiration and the goal is one and the same: Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, the crucified and risen Lord.

Baptism and the Easter People

195. 'By the sacrament of baptism . . . a man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life' (*Decree on Ecumenism*, n. 22). Once again we see the sacrament of baptism as fundamental to our understanding of this Christian imperative, this call to holiness. Baptism is the Easter sacrament, the source of new life. It is our first sacramental encounter with Jesus Christ. In and through baptism each Christian is identified in sign and substance with the death of Jesus Christ and shares his risen life. 'You have been buried with him when you were baptised, and by baptism you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead' (Col 2:12). The liturgy of the Easter Vigil proclaims: 'This is the night when Christians everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed

from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness'. The Church here points to the link between sharing in risen life and growth in holiness. It is a developing process and because through baptism we are brought together into the one body of Christ, we are made one people, drawing strength and mutual support from each other in Christ, and filled with the joy of his resurrection.

196. It was in this sense that Pope John Paul II, drawing on words attributed to St Augustine, said to the people of Harlem: 'If we are silent about the joy which comes from knowing about Jesus, the very stones of our cities will cry out! For we are an Easter people and "Alleluia" is our song' (October 2 1979). We have chosen the words 'The Easter People' for the title of our Message, because they best express the truth that we are a community formed by baptism and sharing the life of the crucified and risen Lord. As St Paul says: 'And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation' (2 Cor 5:17-18). The continuing task of the teaching Church is to open the eyes of all Catholics to the treasures they have in their baptism and their faith and to form them in Christ. It is also our duty and joy to lead others, especially those among whom we live, to a knowledge of these treasures. At the same time, we commit ourselves to work for unity with our fellow Christians, having already acknowledged that with them we are becoming one community of reconciliation. We accept in faith our baptismal mission to every human being. Christians, like the Christ they represent, must become poor with the poor. Suffering and serving with them, they help the poor to discover their dignity and their relationship with God. It is a mission which must involve loss, surrender, a kind of death. It is the way of the Easter People.
197. We are, first and foremost, called as people of God to work where we are, to be rooted in the nation of which we are citizens, to hand on to our immediate neighbours 'this reconciliation' whereby God has reconciled us to himself through Christ. Together with our Christian brothers and sisters, we have always to find fresh ways of fashioning within society the vision of the 'new creation'. It is the profoundest truth about man, about creation, about human society and about the hope and destiny which has been won for all by Christ. With courage and imagination we ought to illuminate the problems which face our country and help to develop the potential within its people. We offer an alternative vision that is bound to

question the assumptions and ambitions of many. From within political parties, industry, the world of education, local government, wherever people come together to form community and build society, there we, the Easter People, should be, not to dominate or to moralise but to offer with humility and a sense of dedicated service the truth that sets men free.

198. The people of our countries are familiar with struggle and set-back. It may seem that the English and Welsh peoples have for a time lost their way and have become obsessed with materialistic values and unenlightened self-interest. Within society we, the Easter People, have our part to play, our mission to fulfil. We can perhaps contribute a renewed sense of community, of what it means to be part of a people. We can contribute an alternative vision of education which will emerge from the work to renew our schools and to develop a life-long programme of Christian education. We can contribute an understanding of the dignity and rights of each individual which will enrich and revitalise political and social initiatives. More perhaps than others we can present the gospel vision of one world, one human family, called to share with each other the good things of our planet. Above all the Easter People, by its presence and witness, can respond to the deep spiritual hunger of people, to that search for meaning and purpose which never dies completely in human beings. In times of economic anxieties we can show the richness of faith; in times of crisis, the strength of well-founded hope. We bring with us wherever we are and whatever we do the saving power of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.
199. 'God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy; when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus. This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace . . . We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he meant us to live it' (Eph 2:4-10).
200. This is, then, the vision of the Easter People. This is how we, the bishops of England and Wales, understand the role of the Church as it was experienced and discerned in the National Pastoral Congress. We have called the people of God to renew its commitment and its understanding of ministry and mission. We now call on Catholics to undertake with courage and faith the task that lies ahead. It will cost us much in sacrifice, work and prayer. But we will go ahead joyfully, in union with the risen Lord.

APPENDIX

TOWARDS PASTORAL PLANNING — THE OUTLINE OF A PROCESS

1. The National Pastoral Congress has given to the Church in England and Wales a new vision and sense of purpose. To this the bishops have added their own contribution. The whole Church must now begin to realise this vision with bishops, priests, people and religious sharing their thoughts and listening to one another, planning and together implementing their plans in parishes, deaneries and at diocesan level.
2. What is offered in this appendix is an outline of how to plan pastoral action, a process which can be followed in parishes, deaneries and dioceses. It is not in itself a pastoral plan but a suggested method which priests and people can use to create one in their own situation. It is described as a process because it is continuous and because it can be taken up at different points, provided that the whole process has been understood. The point at which the process is taken up will vary because not every parish, deanery or diocese is at the same stage of development.

THE PROCESS

Stage One: Discovering the Needs

3. Planning pastoral action begins when priests and people in a parish come together and examine their own situation. They must sit down together and ask:
 - What are the real needs of the people in this area? It is important not to generalise about people's needs. A close look must be taken at the actual living situation in each area and all needs should be considered — not just the obvious ones.

- What should the Church be doing to meet those needs? When all local needs have been considered, general aims can be set out which express how the Church will try to respond to particular needs. It is important to try to achieve agreement about basic aims.
- 4. It is easiest to begin this process with a small group of people of varying ages and from as many different backgrounds as possible. In a parish it will be important to invite people who are known to be enthusiastic for the Church, who are sensitive and knowledgeable about local life and who are willing to be involved — even if at this stage they are uncertain of the demands that will be made of them. In discovering the needs in the area, those concerned should try to consult as many people as possible, listening to their fears and concerns. In time, such a group may become a parish committee but that is not its first purpose.

Stage Two: Choosing Priorities

- 5. It will not be practical to attempt to meet all the needs which are discovered and so priorities must be chosen. Every parish will face a wide range of needs but with prayerful reflection an attempt should be made to choose those needs which are most urgent, most fundamental and where influence for good can be brought to bear. Sometimes, it may be impractical to start by tackling the most fundamental needs. In the short term it is most important to work at problems where there is some chance of success. The more difficult issues can then be tackled later with greater confidence and experience.
- 6. It is important that the priorities which are chosen should be clearly identified and publicised in the parish or area concerned. Then organisations, schools and other groups can respond to them in their own way.
- 7. When needs and priorities have been established in a parish, it may well be that they will be seen to be related to the problems and priorities of other parishes or the deanery as a whole. It will be useful to meet at an inter-parochial or deanery level to co-ordinate the choice of priorities. It may even be more practical to carry out the process entirely at deanery level if local circumstances indicate that deanery planning would be more effective.

Stage Three: Planning the Action

8. When the priorities have been chosen, the next stage is to plan the action needed. Each priority could be treated in the following way:
 - (a) a clear, realistic and practical objective must be set out;
 - (b) the various ways of achieving the objective should be considered and those most likely to meet local needs chosen;
 - (c) the action needed should be worked out in detail and a programme established;
 - (d) a clear decision must be reached as to who is responsible for the action;
 - (e) a target date should be set for the completion of the action.
9. It will be important also to become aware of existing activities, including those of other Churches and local voluntary groups which have similar objectives. Duplication of activities should be avoided. Extending an existing programme will sometimes be the best form of action a parish can take.
10. Planning action should always include investigating the resources available. This means not just financial resources, but people with skills or talents, buildings, equipment and whatever else may be needed. The fullest possible use of both human and material resources should be made. Where there is good prospect of tackling a project on an ecumenical basis, the possibility of sharing resources should be explored.

Stage Four: Implementing the Plans

11. When the programmes have been settled, action can begin. While the plans are being carried out, it is important that someone is responsible for each project, to ensure that the objectives are constantly kept in mind and adhered to. If the project or programme is not achieving what it set out to do, it may be necessary to adjust or change it.
12. Good communications about plans and activities, between parishes, deanery and diocese are vital. It may be helpful to draw up a plan showing the aims, objectives and activities decided upon in each parish or deanery and circulating this widely. It will be important to present regular progress reports to those bearing special responsibility for pastoral activity in the diocese.

Stage Five: Evaluating the Action

13. When the target date is reached or, after a set period of time if the action is prolonged, an evaluation of the success of the project must be made. It will be important to refer back to the original objectives. If these were clear and precise, it will be possible to decide how far they have been achieved.
14. In evaluating the project, the importance of the original needs must be kept in mind but value may also be attached to the experience gained and possible from the relationships established in the process. It is unlikely that any one project will be completed before the need for another is apparent. Then the process begins again.

General Comments

15. This process can be carried out by a small group, a parish, a community, a deanery or a diocese. It is most effective when it happens at several levels in a co-ordinated way. For example, parishes and deaneries can meet first to examine local needs and decide upon priorities. These could then be brought to a diocesan meeting where overall priorities for the diocese can be established. The next stage — planning the action — can then be carried out at parish, deanery and diocesan level. If priorities are chosen at diocesan level, the co-operation of the deaneries will be essential since normally it will be they who must plan and implement the priorities which have been chosen.
16. This process is only one suggested way of turning some of the Congress ideas into action, a way which builds on already existing activities in the Church and gives scope for new activities. It is based on the SEE — JUDGE — ACT method and on the idea that ACTION — REFLECTION — ACTION must be a continuous process. It has been used successfully in many places but it is not the only way. Care should always be taken to ensure that individuals who cannot or do not wish to join in such a process are not neglected or allowed to feel left out.
17. This is a process for deepening the life and mission of the Church. It needs to be carried out in a spirit of prayer, for its fundamental intention is none other than helping the Church to become more fully the Body of Christ in the world today.

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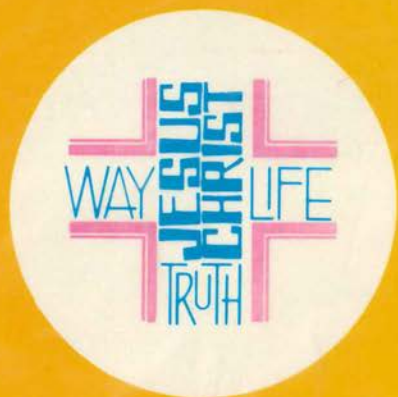
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